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**Border Lines in the  
Field of Doubtful Practices**

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# ❁ ❁ Border Lines in the Field of Doubtful Practices

BY

H. CLAY TRUMBULL

AUTHOR OF "FRIENDSHIP THE MASTER PASSION," "STUDIES IN ORIENTAL  
SOCIAL LIFE," "THE KNIGHTLY SOLDIER," "WAR MEM-  
ORIES OF AN ARMY CHAPLAIN," ETC.

NEW YORK      CHICAGO      TORONTO  
Fleming H. Revell Company  
Publishers of Evangelical Literature

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**H. CLAY TRUMBULL**

**New York: 158 Fifth Avenue**  
**Chicago: 125 North Wabash Ave.**  
**Toronto: 25 Richmond Street, W.**  
**London: 21 Paternoster Square**  
**Edinburgh: 100 Princes Street**



## Preface

YOUNG people usually have different views from old people as to popular amusements and recreations, and as to the better use of both time and money. Each class is likely to feel that the other class is mistaken, and is entertaining an erroneous view of such matters in question. An old saying is that "young people think old ones are fools, and old folks know young ones are." While this is not wholly true, it may truly be said that old persons are prone to forget how life and its occupations looked to them while they were young, and that young persons are unpleasantly conscious of this fact in all discussions with their seniors concerning debatable customs and practice.

This state of things is in the mind of the writer of these pages, as he gives his views

on such mooted customs as wine-drinking, the use of tobacco, card-playing, theatre-going, and social dancing. In every instance he puts himself back, for a standpoint, to the position which he occupied while a mere youth in a community where the laxer view as to all these practices generally prevailed. While young, he was never restrained in such matters by parental prohibitions, nor was he brought up in any surroundings of over-strictness, approaching asceticism or puritanical rigidity. Hence there has been no rebound of his nature from one extreme to the other.

The stand which he now takes, and in these pages defends as wisest and best, was the one which he chose as a young man, not only before he had any thought of ever being a clergyman, but before he was even a member of any Christian church. The fact that some of these views have been confirmed by an exceptionally wide and varied experience of more than half a cen-

ture of subsequent life and thought and observation, may not in itself be supposed to invalidate the correctness of the view thus early decided on.

In discussing these matters, the author recognizes the fact that many persons whose opinion he values, and to whose character he looks up, take a different view from himself of the subject in question, and that he has no right to say that they are wholly wrong and he alone is right. Therefore, approaching the subject from this standpoint and in this spirit, he may appeal more strongly to some who are not influenced by the ordinary arguments put forth by those who will not admit that there is more than one side to the subject.

Indeed, it is because some such presentation of the matter has before now influenced favorably quite a number of young persons, that the writer has put into this permanent form the extended statements of his views, at the urgent request of a num-

ber of the young persons thus influenced. He will be glad if other persons are similarly led to a final and satisfactory conclusion.

H. C. T.

PHILADELPHIA,  
April, 1899.

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## **Measurement of Moral Lines**





## Measurement of Moral Lines

**MANY** a line in morals is like a mathematical line; it has length, but neither breadth nor thickness. As a matter of fact, such a line is not always easily perceived. One can sometimes more readily locate the line when at a distance from it than while close upon it. A man may be within one step of such a line, without knowing on which side of it he stands, or perceiving any decided gain in moving this way or that. As, however, he advances in the one direction or the other, the consciousness that he is going in the right direction or in the wrong grows on him, until perhaps he realizes too late how much better it would

have been for him to have faced in the opposite direction at the beginning of his march.

The more positive and important the question of morals involved, the easier its fixing and defining. If, indeed, there be a direct command, prohibition, or approval, on any given subject in the written law of God or man, it ought not to be difficult to see that the dividing line runs between the thing forbidden and the thing approved. But where the question involves a principle not distinctly disclosed in every action based on it, the matter is not so easily settled. In such cases, the decision of each individual is more likely to be made in view of the extremes of practice, rather than of what is evident on the first crossing of the line separating the two tendencies of conduct. This it is that makes so many shadowy lines between courses of action not defined by explicit command or prohibition, which confuse and disturb conscien-

## Measurement of Moral Lines 15

tious seekers of the right, and doers of what they suppose to be best.

Where the right and the wrong are clearly defined, it is comparatively easy to know what one ought to do, or ought not to do. But where one must choose for himself between two courses of permissible conduct, in view of their manifest tendencies severally, and yet where good men in the community differ widely as to which course is the better, it is not always easy for one to know and to do what is best. The young and the doubting need help at such points in their decidings.

Border lines, or lines on the border, between practices popular and allowable yet possibly harmful, and the course that is certainly safest and best, all things considered, are worthy of careful consideration by those who must decide these things for themselves, or who would help others to decide them. Whoever has had experience in the effort to settle such questions,

ought to be ready to lay before others the considerations which have had weight with himself, or which he has found to have weight with others. What has influenced him may help others to arrive at a right decision.

**As to the Drink Question**



## As to the Drink Question

ONE of the first practical questions that a young man has to meet, as he begins to act for himself or as he considers how to act in the world as it is, and where good men differ widely in opinion and in practice, is the question what he had better drink, and what he had better abstain from drinking. This is a matter where the line of absolute right and of true expediency is not clear to all, and where, therefore, the borders on either side of that line are debatable ground in the minds of many.

This is not a new question. It was raised early in the history of the race, according to the sacred record. When the world became so corrupt that God swept the race of man from the face of the earth, save a single

human family which he preserved from the Deluge in an ark of safety, in order to bridge over the chasm of destruction, Noah, godly patriarch as he was, began his new life in the renovated world by planting a vineyard and making wine of the grapes. "He drank of the wine, and was drunken." That was the beginning, or the new beginning, after the Deluge, of intoxication—intoxication not from adulterated liquors or any miserable substitute for the best drink of that kind available, but from *pure home-made wine*. Our old ancestor Noah was shamefully drunk on home-made liquor, and from his day to ours the question has been an open one, among his descendants, whether it is safer and better to let alone even the purest intoxicating liquors, or to follow his example so far as to make wine, or to drink wine after it is made, without drinking so much as to be drunken as he was. On which side of the line between the moderate use of alcoholic liquors and abstinence is it



wise to take one's stand, when the opposite borders are so near each other?

It must be admitted, to begin with, that the Bible does not explicitly forbid, in so many words, the use of wine or strong drink, although it does prohibit their use by certain persons at certain times, or under certain circumstances. It will, perhaps, just here be claimed by some literalist, that in the Old Testament at least there is a specific prohibition in the words:

“ Look not thou upon the wine when it is red,  
When it giveth its color in the cup,  
When it goeth down smoothly :  
At the last it biteth like a serpent,  
And stingeth like an adder.”

Yet will any fair-minded reader of the Bible seriously claim that this proverbial injunction is to be taken as an absolute prohibition of wine under any and all circumstances? If so, what will he do with the other injunction in the same book of Proverbs: “ Give . . . wine unto the bitter

in soul"? "Bread," "wine," and "oil" are together named by the Psalmist as God's *good gifts to man*. There can, it is true, be no question that there is an inspired caution in the injunction in Proverbs against wine, in view of its recognized dangers; but it can no more be claimed that it is a positive command to all for always than is the injunction in the same book of Proverbs: "Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise." If, indeed, the first-named proverb be taken as a command to be observed in absolute literalness, it might be met by simply shutting one's eyes while drinking, or by using white wines and champagne, or, again, by using brandy, rum, and whiskey. This merely shows the absurdity of pivoting one's belief as to Bible commands on the letter of a single text capable of being construed in several different ways.

In the New Testament, not only is there no positive prohibition of any wine-drink-

ing, but it is asserted that Jesus Christ came "eating and drinking" like others, and that he even made wine for others to drink. This certainly shows that the use of wine is not in itself a sin, that is, it is not a sin *per se*. Yet the dangers of wine-drinking are referred to and cautioned against in several places in the New Testament. Some perhaps would claim that the example of Jesus Christ as to wine-drinking is obligatory on all of his disciples. Yet why is it so in that thing, any more than in his being "a carpenter," or in his being without a home in which to lay his head, or in his wearing an Oriental costume? A century ago, one Lord George Gordon showed his sense of the duty of imitating Jesus Christ—following his example literally—by becoming a Jew in religion, and attaching himself to a synagogue, because "the example of Christ . . . we were scrupulously to follow in every respect," and as Jesus "conformed to Jewish customs, opinions, and manners, so

we were bound to imitate his example in these things." *This*, to be sure, seems ridiculous, yet why more so than the claim put forth by some Christians of to-day that they drink wine as a beverage for the express purpose of being so far like Jesus Christ?

One thing is certain: The Bible no more forbids total abstinence to any man than it forbids wine-drinking to all; and it does command and commend abstinence in certain cases. Wine-drinking, even in moderation, was forbidden to the priests of God when they were to enter upon their holiest services; and to him who would consecrate himself for a season, or for a lifetime, as a sacred Nazirite, the command was explicit: "He shall separate himself from wine and strong drink; he shall drink no vinegar of wine, or vinegar of strong drink, neither shall he drink any liquor of grapes, nor eat fresh grapes or dried. All the days of his consecration shall he eat nothing that is

made of the grapevine, from the kernels even to the husk." That seems pretty near to total abstinence. It would be called ultra carefulness, or "fanaticism," by some persons. Yet it seemed to work very well in some cases. Samson, the strongest man known to the world, and John the Baptist, the greatest of all those born of woman, under the old dispensation, were Nazirite abstainers. So far there is evidence that the use of wine was perilous, and that abstinence from wine was consistent with the highest consecration, the greatest physical strength, and the grandest spiritual attainments, on the part of the abstainer. Therefore the question of *our* personal duty, as to the use or the rejection of wine as a beverage, is at least an open one in the light of present Christian expediency.

If, indeed, the duty were laid of God upon every Christian to use intoxicating drinks as a beverage, whether he wants them or not, then we should have no alter-

native but to go forward and take the risks. It will, however, be admitted by the most zealous advocates of moderate drinking, that no specific command in the Bible enjoins such drinking on everybody ; and that the Christian liberty of the Bible includes the liberty of letting liquor alone, if we find that it is not a safe thing for ourselves, apart from the question of our personal example to others. This being the case, it is well for us to weigh carefully the exceptional risks of wine-drinking, to persons of our peculiar characteristics and temperament and circumstances, as illustrated in the course of those who have gone before us in the path of life we are treading, and then to decide as to the claims on ourselves of total abstinence for our own sakes.

On what ground can a man claim, in view of the example of others, that he may count himself fairly safe in the moderate use of intoxicating beverages? Does he reckon on his brain-power, and his intellec-

tual attainments and vigor? Men vastly superior to himself in that very sphere, have—as he cannot but know—been often overcome by intemperance, when they purposed only moderation. Indeed, it is directly affirmed, by high medical authority, that brain-workers are peculiarly liable to be swept into intemperance if they venture on the use of alcoholic stimulants. And the world of intellect is full of instances of ruined genius through an inability to resist the temptations of excess in drink.

Is it the power of his own strong will that one rests on for his control of appetite, as he ventures on a limited indulgence in this line? Before his very eyes, men of more strongly marked will power than he would think of claiming as his own have been openly proved incapable of moderation in drinking, when they departed from the bounds of abstinence. There are well-known historic examples, in our own land and day, of men of iron will and of pre-

eminent determination found helpless in a struggle with the foe which this man thinks can be safely grappled by himself. If, indeed, two Americans were named as perhaps more distinguished for their indomitable will than any other Americans of their generation, it would be found that both of them were compelled to admit their inability to find safety except in abstinence.

One perhaps, however, rests on God's grace to sustain him, if he deliberately incurs a special risk without a commandment thereto. He must surely admit, or at all events his friends must admit for him, that men who have seemed even purer, holier, more godly, and more reliant on Divine help, than himself, have become drunkards, even within the limits of the present generation. The Christian abstainer, who stands firmly on a place of assured safety even at the temple's pinnacle, may well shrink from tempting God by yielding his foothold there, in the hope that holy



angels will be sent to bear him up in his mid-air flight toward the drunkard's Gehenna.

A few illustrative instances out of the sphere of the writer's personal observation, in religious circles merely, may add emphasis to the general truth here declared. His earlier recollections are of a distinguished New York pastor, who had been honored by the foremost academic degrees known to scholars or divines, and who had attained to exceptional prominence in the councils of the Presbyterian Church. That man was quite sure that temperance, and not abstinence, was the thing for him; but his disgrace from intoxication was an appalling fact to the writer, who saw something of the sorrow and shame it brought to the people of God whose loved pastor he had been.

Later, the writer knew of a Methodist clergyman who, as a stirring evangelist, was blessed in winning souls to the Saviour, and whose praise was in the churches

far and near, but who did not feel it his duty to be a total abstainer. He therefore staggered in and from his high position, and found a level with those who were overcome with drink.

Again it was a distinguished Baptist doctor of divinity who thought himself above the necessity of abstinence, but who found himself not above the danger of intemperance. It was not long before he was seen by the writer reeling through the public streets, a hopeless victim of strong drink.

Then it was one of the more brilliant of the young Congregational ministers of the writer's acquaintance who was confident that moderation was better than abstinence. While not yet in middle life he was found in the very gutter by his parishioners, before he even thought he was overstepping the bounds of strictest prudence.

An Episcopal clergyman of the writer's acquaintance, who could not suffer himself to suppose that total abstinence was the

only safe ground of conduct, was again and again intoxicated among his people. He was given one new charge after another by his bishop, in the hope of his reform, but in each case he gave way to his appetite, which he was powerless to resist.

In another case the writer knew of a prominent Lutheran clergyman who was for years an abstainer, but who began to drink beer on the advice of his physician. He drank more and more until it deadened his best intellectual powers. He left the pulpit, and the last the writer heard of him he was a sodden drunkard going from friend to friend begging money for drink.

The writer became quite attached to a young Roman Catholic priest because of his frank, manly ways, his genial spirit, and his unflinching patriotism. But he was saddened to see the priest go down, step by step, from moderate drinking to intoxication, until he was silenced by his good bishop.

These are only a few representative cases,

among very many, of the fall of clergymen, under the writer's personal observation, because of moderate drinking being looked upon as reasonably safe for a man in the Christian ministry. Men of this specific class are named, not because they are peculiarly liable to fall, but because they would be counted safest in the struggle for self-control.

Alcoholic stimulants and narcotics stand quite by themselves as to their tendency in ordinary use, in that their using increases the desire for their use. In this they differ from food and drink generally. They fail to satisfy. The more one has of them, the more one wants of them. Special power of self-control is demanded of one who would use them in moderation; and as the demand for increased strength grows, the amount of strength is lessened by every added indulgence. In this, drinking is a greater danger than gluttony or any such indulgence of appetite.

## As to the Drink Question 33

In the ranks of the laity, the writer has seen yet more frequent illustrations of the perils of liquor-using under the most favorable circumstances. Men of strong will, of large brain, of refinement and culture, of mature judgment, of high Christian attainments; ladies in the choicest social circle, active in the church and in the Sunday-school; young persons and older, of both sexes,—he has seen going down to the drunkard's life and grave; not here and there a solitary case, but in so many instances as to make him stand appalled at the fearful risks in the use of intoxicants, and to cause him to forswear everything that can intoxicate, or that leads to a love of intoxicants, because of the possible fearful consequences to himself, as apart from the question of his example before others.

The very youth who first enlisted the writer's efforts in the mission-school work, and who was thus instrumental in shaping

the writer's life-course, a youth who connected himself with the same church as the writer during the same season of religious interest, died of delirium-tremens, in his own mother's home, before he was yet twenty-five years old. He was willing to take the risks of the use of liquors,—and he did so.

Of other young people who took their Christian stand at the season of religious interest above referred to, two were subsequently united in marriage. Both continued active in Christian work. They had a lovely home, a home of wealth and refinement. When they had already passed middle life, the husband and father in that home laughed at a friend's suggestion that there was danger in the moderate use of wine at his family table—in the exercise of his "Christian liberty." Within five years from the time of that rejected warning, that husband was compelled to place his lovely wife in an institution for the treatment of

drunkards, and in two years more he was compelled to give up his prominent business position because of his reputation as a hopeless slave of drink.

And so the writer might go on indefinitely in his personal reminiscences in this direction. Indeed, out of an exceptionally wide and varied acquaintance throughout this country, East, West, North, and South, he can say unhesitatingly, that he never yet knew a single family circle, where he was acquainted with its membership to the extent of only one remove from the centre, in which there was not, or had not been, at least one victim of intemperance. If, however, your circle of family relatives has no such sad record, there is just one way by which you can make sure of not being yourself the first victim of intemperance there; and that is by letting intoxicants wholly alone—in the exercise of your “Christian liberty.” And there is no other sure way.

John B. Gough suggests that even though there is no prohibition in the Bible of a man's going into a powder magazine with a lighted candle or match, there are few men who would care to take that risk unnecessarily, simply because it is not positively forbidden. What *can* be done is one thing; what it is *best* to do is another thing. To take an illustration, for example, out of another sphere. Granted that there be no sin in the thing itself, in the making of one's home, with one's family, in a house where poisonous sewer-gases find their way through the drain-pipes into the living-rooms; granted, also, that some dwellers in that house have remained alive, while others died from the poison-laden atmosphere,—would it be wise or right to seek a home there for one's self, or one's loved ones, with the risk involved, while another house of like advantages, that is wholly free from such perils, is open to one's choice? Who would claim this?



## As to the Drink Question 37

There is no sound basis for the frequent assertion that wine as a beverage is a safe and natural drink in vine-growing countries, or that it is necessary there because of the water of the region being an unsafe drink. Neither is it true that wine or other alcoholic drinks are necessary to the fullest measure of health in any climate, especially in exhausting extremes of heat or cold.

It was in a land of the vine that Noah became shamefully drunk on native wine, and again that Samson gained his remarkable degree of strength without it. Drunkenness prevails in wine-growing countries, as truly as the bloated faces of the beer-drinker, or the surly ill-nature of the cider-drinking sot, are to be found in the region of the brewery and the cider-mill. In France and Switzerland, in recent years, the government has been necessitated to take positive action for the checking of intemperance in wine-producing regions. Who can believe

that the drink that God gives in the springs and streams of a country for the dwellers therein, is not as safe for ordinary use as a manufactured drink that can intoxicate?

The writer has been in the continents of Europe, Asia, Africa and America, in various experiences and in many trying circumstances, but he has never found it necessary to use wine or other alcoholic drinks as a beverage, or, indeed, any substitute for the water of the region, unless at times it was some mineral water that could be easily obtained. In this his experience has been like thousands of others.

Explorers in tropical regions, or in arctic ones, have uniformly found, like Stanley and Greeley and Nansen, that alcoholic drinks are not safe in comparison with water. Why then should one claim that wine or strong drinks are, in certain climates, necessary as a beverage?

The author was for three years in army life in the American Civil War, camping

and campaigning in heat and in cold, in wet and in dry, in woods and in swamps, on clayey roads and on sandy beaches, yet he never found it necessary, nor deemed it safe, to use or to give to others alcoholic drinks as a common beverage or as an ordinary strengthener. Administering alcoholic liquids to a person sinking from loss of blood or from the sudden shock of a wound, was a thing quite by itself, more in the nature of surgery than of medicine. That is another matter. Thousands of men in the army pursued the practice of the writer, and thousands did differently.

Several years after the war the writer called at the office of the Surgeon-General of the United States Army in Washington to see a former chief medical officer of the division to which he had been attached. That officer was now engaged in the compilation of medical and surgical statistics of the war. After a few minutes of conversation, the surgeon said to the writer:

“Chaplain, you look very well after all our campaigning together. I know of the exposure you had in service; how came you to stand it so well?”

“Well, Colonel, it is not for me, a layman, to give my opinion to you, an authority in your profession; but as you ask me that question, I will tell you plainly what I think. When you surgeons prescribed quinine and whiskey for us regularly, I took the quinine, and didn’t take the whiskey.”

The medical officer turned in his chair, and replied:

“If you had told me that in war time, Chaplain, I’d have laughed at you. But now I quite agree with you. As I have sat here and examined reports from regiments and hospitals in different portions of the army, comparing those where whiskey was used freely with those where it was not, I have seen such a difference in the percentage of sickness and death in favor of the

non-use of whiskey, that I only wonder how so many soldiers lived through our treatment of them."

This testimony had all the more force, in view of the fact that that medical officer was very far from being an abstainer formerly or at that time. He spoke out his convictions as a scientific observer, without reference to his personal preferences.

It is evident that alcoholic beverages are not a necessity in any country or climate, while they may be an injury to their user anywhere even in moderation, and are sure to be harmful in excess. Hence one's decision as to his personal use of them becomes an important question for consideration. Even though the Bible does not explicitly command total abstinence as the duty of all, the Bible leaves it to every child of God to be a total abstainer if he wishes to be; therefore it is for the Christian believer to do that which he sees and knows to be best and safest to do.

Looking around him, every man sees that better men than himself have become drunkards through attempting to be moderate drinkers, and that there is no certainty that he will not drink to excess if he drinks at all, while he is perfectly safe so long as he remains a total abstainer—as he is privileged to remain. Every man sees, moreover, that his example in this matter is sure to influence some who are obviously weaker than himself; therefore that, if he drinks at all, he may lead these persons to drink to excess. Having, then, the choice between drinking and abstaining, and knowing that by drinking he imperils himself and imperils others, while by abstaining he secures safety for himself, and sets a safe example to others, why should any man be in doubt as to his personal duty?

**How About Tobacco?**





## How About Tobacco ?

IF tobacco-using is a good thing, it is well to have that fact known by young persons, as well as by those who would influence them. If tobacco-using is not a good thing, it is well to have that fact understood by young and old. What is to be said fairly on either side of this question ?

There are certainly some things to be said in favor of using tobacco. That cannot be denied. To begin with, it is very fashionable. It prevails in what is called "good society." The man who never uses tobacco is liable to be an exception in almost any community. Good men indulge in this habit—Christian men, Christian ministers, and eminent Jews, as well as men distinguished and successful in almost every branch of professional and business life.

Then there is a social attractiveness about the habit. Lovers of tobacco find a certain companionship in a good cigar, and a charm in companionship over a good cigar, which they think is not to be found elsewhere. The young man who does not smoke is liable to shut himself out from this means of social enjoyment; he cannot follow the example of some of the best men of the community; he cannot share the peculiar enjoyment of his tobacco-loving companion.

These inducements to tobacco-using should not be lost sight of. They are sufficient to lead a majority of young men to form the habit and to cling to it. They are not without weight with many thinking parents. Mothers do not always want their sons to be different from other people's sons. They are satisfied to have them follow the example of so good men as their fathers or their pastors. As it is not unmistakably a question of morals, they cannot have it in their hearts to insist that their

sons shall refrain from doing "what all the other fellows do." They "don't want to be rigid and puritanical, you know." These inducements to tobacco-using are widely recognized and widely prevail.

But there are some very positive objections to tobacco-using, aside from any debatable question of morals. One of these objections is its uncleanness. Absolute cleanliness or purity of person is impossible to a tobacco-user. The fragrance of a good cigar while burning is attractive to those who use tobacco, and to many who do not. But no one—literally no one—admires the stench which remains in the hair and clothing, and which befouls the breath of the tobacco-user, after the more delicate aroma of the weed has passed away. A tobacco-user is invariably more or less offensive in his person to nostrils not deadened by constant familiarity with the same fetid odor. He is rarely conscious of the fact. He has no idea that his entrance

into a room fouls the air, and that his very presence in a car, or his passing on the street, is notified to refined senses by his impurity of person. He little thinks of the diminished attractiveness of his presence to mother or wife, to sister or friend, through his impregnation with offensive odors—unless, indeed, these loved ones have been brought by his habit to know no difference between fragrant and foul odors.

Many a sleeping-car berth is hopelessly befouled by the contact of its blankets with the stench-impregnated bodies of its former fashionable occupants. There are passengers who habitually, or often, travel only in the daytime, so as to avoid passing a night in a tobacco-reeking "palace car." It would, indeed, be a good business enterprise to run extra sleeping-cars with a provision that no tobacco-user could enter them, with a double price to be charged to those who are willing to pay for personal purity.

As to the discomfort to wives through

smoking husbands, wives themselves know as others cannot. The wife of a distinguished scientific professor hearing a gentleman speak of his non-use of tobacco, asked him, "Do you never smoke, or use tobacco in any form?" And on his saying that he did not, she added out of her home experiences, "Your wife doesn't know how much she has to be grateful for. Her house needn't always be like a pig-sty." Of course, that was an extravagant comparison, and its reference to the "pig-sty" was, perhaps, to its atmosphere, and not to its actual filth, but it illustrated what many a wife feels as to the inevitable residuum of stale tobacco smoke in her house.

In any event, every tobacco-user is in a greater or less degree offensive by his personal uncleanness to many whom he meets, if not to those whom he holds dearest. Most tobacco-using clergymen would be astonished if they knew to how many in their congregation their stench of

person renders them offensive; how many housekeepers open their doors and windows to air the rooms after the pastor's social call; how many persons shrink from the nauseating odors of the tobacco-perfumed study, when desiring religious counsel.

For be it remembered that it is not his person alone which the user of tobacco renders offensive; his smoking-room and his whole house suffer similarly. Curtains, carpets, furniture, pictures, and books, all reek alike with the foul residuum of stale tobacco smoke. There is no such thing as a clean room where tobacco is used. Said a gentleman recently, "I had a smoking clergyman at my house for some weeks. He smoked in the room which he used as a study. He has been away from us now five months. We have done everything in our power to cleanse that room; but on a damp day, when the air is heavy, the smell of old tobacco smoke is distinctly perceptible there."

An instance might be named where a refined lady was for weeks in her sick-room and greatly desired spiritual converse with her pastor, a distinguished city clergyman, yet had to deprive herself of that privilege because of his tobacco-using. She said, "If he should come into this room, the odor of stale tobacco might overpower me. In any event, I should be annoyed by it for days afterward." Such instances are more frequent than tobacco-using clergymen suspect. In one case at least a prominent college pastor was practically shut out from usefulness as a spiritual guide of the choicest students by the bad name of his "smokehouse study." His unsavory reputation finally caused his leaving that field.

Indeed, if there were no other objection to tobacco-using than its defilement of his person and his surroundings, the really pure and the nobly proud young man would abhor it, as lowering his plane of personal living by its essential uncleanness; and he would

feel that its fashionableness, its companionableness, and the delights of its indulgence, were quite too dearly purchased as its inevitable cost of rendering him offensive to persons of highest refinement and keenest sensibilities. And the pure and proud mother who appreciates this side of the case would feel that it must not be that her darling boy should lose his purity of person and become an offense to all delicate nostrils. Indeed, there are young men whose purity is obviously such that they could not be tobacco-users; and there are mothers also of such pride and purity that they would almost as soon see their boys in the grave as on the level of uncleanness with the average tobacco-smoker.

There is force in the suggestion of Mr. Moody on this point. When some one asked him if the Bible had anything to say on the subject of tobacco, he replied that the only text that seemed to him to apply was, "He which is filthy, let him be filthy still."



An eminent Baptist clergyman, the Rev. Dr. P. S. Henson, well known in Richmond, in Philadelphia, in Chicago, and elsewhere, has given his personal experience in the line of the above-stated truths, and such testimony may have more weight with some than mere general assertions. Dr. Henson says he was brought up on a tobacco plantation, and, after sundry nauseating protests of nature, became a smoker at about twelve years of age. He continued the practice until it became an inveterate habit. At length he decided to break himself free from the chains which bound him, whatever might be the cost.

“For a long time,” he says, “I had been in trouble on account of my tobacco. It was not *domestic*, because blessed with the most patient of wives. Nor was it *physical*, because blessed with a body of extraordinary toughness of fibre. But I had trouble of conscience, which for a Christian is of all trouble the very worst. First of all

there was a sense of *personal defilement*, of which I could not quite divest myself. It is nowhere said in the Scriptures, as many suppose, that 'cleanliness is next to godliness;' but it is said, 'Be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord;' and the consciousness of carrying about with me, and the prospect of leaving behind me, other fragrance than that of simple piety, was not a particularly savory reflection. I had noticed, too, that in this regard tobacco-users, as a rule, did not improve as age grew on; and the possibility of coming to such a pass of palpable filthiness as some old fellows . . . did sometimes disquiet me.

"And along with this came the conviction that tobacco-using was *against nature*, and seeing that God is the God of nature as well as grace, I could not help feeling that in running against nature I was running against not *it*, but *Him*; and this, I was persuaded, was not a thing to be safely done; for however slowly God's mills do

grind, they grind exceeding small, and, sooner or later, as sure as we live, they will grind exactly all. As a consequence, there were texts in the Bible, and not a few of them, which, while not difficult in themselves, perhaps were very difficult for me, and so I dared not preach from them, lest I should convict myself and stand convicted in the presence of my people. I could not urge them to 'lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness' if the traces of such superfluity were discoverable in my breath and on my body. I could not insist that they should 'keep the body under,' if *my* body kept *me* under. I could not ring out the cry of conscious Christian freedom, if I myself was a slave to a fleshly lust warring against the soul."

Then came the struggle of the slave for liberty. "My whole system," says Dr. Henson, "having so long been accustomed to the use of a narcotic, my body having so long been saturated with it through and

through, my brain having so long been dependent upon its artificial stimulation, it was just a question, and one of exceeding gravity, it seemed to me, as to the possible consequences of so sudden and complete a revolution in the whole habits of my life. But having first solemnly decided that it was the Christian thing, at least for me, to do, then there was nothing left but to do it, trusting Him, for whose sake I did it, to take care of all the consequences. And He did, in the most surprising and beautiful way."

It cannot be expected that old tobacco-users generally will have the desire, the readiness, or the courage, to be free, like Dr. Henson, from this bondage. But young men and boys, at least, may be prompted by his warning and example to keep free, or to break free from the slavery while they can.

Of course, tobacco-users generally are incapacitated by their use of tobacco to com-

prehend the full effects of stale tobacco smoke on their persons and clothing and surrounding atmosphere. A man who always has onions one meal a day is not the one to detect first the smell of onions in another's breath. So well understood is this fact in practical life, that one who wants to eat onions on an occasion is likely to agree with his partner to do the same thing at that time, so that neither will be able to detect the smell of onions. Physicians are, on this account, perhaps the most sensible and careful tobacco-users in the community. Understanding, as they do, the pervasive influence of tobacco odors in a sick-room, many of them are more cautious than others as to the time when, and the place where, and the clothing in which, they smoke their cigars or pipes. But even this only goes to show the danger incurred of making one's self offensive by tobacco-using.

A tobacco-smoker cannot have so keen

a scent or taste as one who never uses tobacco, other things being equal. The fumes of hot smoke have, of course, an effect on the lips and tongue and throat and nostrils similar in kind, if not in measure, to that of hot smoke on pork or beef in a smokehouse. The fashionable smoker, who has been "curing" the inside of his mouth for a few years by this smoke treatment, cannot possibly know the more delicate odors or tastes of "good things" eaten or drunk. Even the epicure is incapacitated for judging accurately the finer grades of wines and other fashionable liquors, or terrapin or fresh mushrooms and such dishes, as well as more substantial food, by applying them to the smoked-ham-like coats of his mouth and palate.

This may be doubted by the man whose organs of taste and smell are in a measure deadened by tobacco-using; but it will not be questioned by any experts who have money at stake on the issue. Tea-im-

porters, and tea-brokers, for example, employ expert "tasters" to pass on tea samples in order to arrive at their relative flavor and value. Such men in some instances receive very high salaries, equalling many college presidents and governors of states, and they must be careful to prove themselves worth their salary. One of these experts being asked about this matter said that it would be impossible to be a good taster and a cigar-smoker. He must choose between giving up his cigars or his business position. And that looked reasonable.

What does a tobacco-smoker know about the fragrance of wildflowers or of new-mown hay and other delicate odors, in his country rides or walks in summer days, while his cigar fumes fill his nostrils? What enjoyment can even his lady companions have in these, as he ruthlessly puffs away at his cigar while on the seat before them on a drive, or as he joins them while

smoking, in a walking-party? How many good things are lost to a cigar-smoker and his companions in consequence of his smoking, even when such smoking seems a comfort or a necessity to himself.

A positive objection to tobacco-using is, in fact, its benumbing influence on the nerves and sensibilities, especially of a boy or a young man. Tobacco is a narcotic, even though at first it seems to act as a stimulant. Its ultimate effect is rather to quiet than to stimulate the nerves. In doing this it tends to allay anxiety and discomfort. It makes its user measurably contented with his condition and attainments. This may, at first glance, seem to be an advantage, as preventing restlessness and worry. Indeed, the use of tobacco is advocated on this very ground, and the argument is made, that the lower classes in the community who can never hope to better their condition are kept in contentment by their pipes and cigars. But the



average American youth needs all the nerves and all the brain-power he possesses to enable him to know his place and to fill it. He ought not to have his sensibilities deadened. He ought not to be satisfied with his present attainments. If he has failed in his day's work, or in his day's hunting for work, he ought not to take an opiate or a narcotic, and lull his sensibilities to rest over his failure. He ought to face the facts with unclouded vision and tense nerves, and determine on better things for to-morrow.

Put two young men of the same ability side by side in a struggle to find occupation, or to make progress in study or business, and if one deadens his nerves by tobacco while the other is always awake in waking hours, the wide-awake young man will soon be ahead of the other. There are, in fact, many large business establishments where a young man who does not use tobacco is always chosen in preference to one

who does, on the score of his increased ambition and quickness and practical efficiency through having his nerves and sensibilities on the alert.

The higher the intellectual and moral plane of the young man, the greater the evil from this benumbing influence of tobacco, for the more he needs strong impellings to carry him forward to his best accomplishment. When others are satisfied with him, a young man has least right to be satisfied with himself. His ideal ought to be higher than theirs. When it does not seem necessary that he should work for a living, or work to keep ahead of his companions, he ought to be keenly alive to the necessity of working to do something worth living for, and to enable him to keep ahead of himself.

Dr. Jay W. Seaver, director of physical culture in Yale University, has made careful experiments in the study of the effects of tobacco, as based on the examination

and comparison of thousands of students, in a series of years. He speaks positively as to these effects in retarding growth and in affecting health. Moreover, he declares that "the matter is of the highest importance as related not only to growth but to morals and character." He has found that while only about five per cent. of the students of highest scholarship in that University use tobacco in any form, more than sixty per cent. of those who get no appointment, as a result of their standing in their studies, are tobacco-users. Yet he is frank to say that "this does not mean that mental decrepitude follows the use of tobacco, for we may read the results in another way ; namely, the kind of mind that permits its possessor to become addicted to a habit that is primarily offensive and deteriorating is the kind of mind that will be graded low on general intellectual tests."

In other words, it would seem from Dr. Seaver's facts and conclusions that it is an

open question whether the men who stand highest in University studies attain their superiority because of their non-use of tobacco, or are merely non-users of tobacco because they are of the sort who are above using tobacco on any consideration. There are other experienced university and college professors who practically agree with Dr. Seaver in his conclusions. Every tobacco-using young man must, therefore, decide for himself, whether he is kept from a higher intellectual stand by the use of tobacco, or is a user of tobacco because he is a man of the lower intellectual order.

At the best, tobacco-using, by smoking cigars or pipe, is an unnatural practice. It cannot be justified or excused as in the line of a natural appetite or desire, like eating, or drinking, or many a personal practice liable to abuse through excess or perverted indulgence. Even in the first instance and in the most moderate degree it is an abnormal treatment of the human system, to

which a person has to be tempted, and often by persistent endeavors to overcome nature's objections, by one who is already under the influence of this unnatural practice.

Most boys who smoke began this practice in imitation of older persons whom they desired to be like, and not because it was in itself a desirable practice. Indeed, it was this fact that first caused the author to decline to use tobacco. He saw that his young companions generally began to smoke in order to seem manly. In view of this, he determined not to attempt smoking until he was so old that no one could say he did it to have an older look. Before he reached that age, he had other good reasons for not beginning.

For a person, young or old, to set fire to a narcotic, like tobacco, or belladonna, or hasheesh, or opium, and then take into the nasal passages, through the mouth, its heated fumes, so as to bring their exciting

or deadening influence to bear directly on the brain, can never be called a natural treatment of the human system, however it may be justified on an occasion by a physician in the treatment of a diseased patient. Such an unnatural practice is sure to have its deleterious effects sooner or later, however long one may live on in spite of it.

To a youth or boy, of the age of many a cigar or cigarette smoker to be seen in the streets or playgrounds of to-day, these narcotic fumes are only and wholly pernicious. They tend to stunt the intellect, to dwarf the manhood, to sap the sources of strength and life. The number of youths who really die because of tobacco-using is not to be measured by the recorded causes of deaths in our bills of mortality, because the system is often broken down by tobacco before the attack of the disease which is the immediate occasion of death, when it might otherwise have been overcome.

A prominent physician in New England, who had earlier seen much service as an army surgeon, said on this point to the writer: "I often have to report the cause of death as 'pneumonia,' or 'typhoid fever,' or 'heart failure,' or some other form of disease, when I see unmistakably that the young man had, because of smoking, no reserve of vital strength with which to meet that acute disorder which he ought to have been able to battle successfully. Tobacco kills a great many more young men than it is ever charged with." And the older men who are killed by tobacco-cancers in the lips and throat are those who made a longer fight with this unnatural and need-less enemy.

And yet another objection to the habit of using tobacco is the bondage into which it brings a man. It is not merely that the habit itself is fastened on him so that, in most cases, he cannot get away from it if he would; but it is that he is bound and

limited by it in his daily life, so that he must find time and place for it however he is circumstanced; and in meeting this necessity he is often compelled to choose between putting himself in the worst company and in the most disagreeable places, or he must make himself bad company, and the place where he is disagreeable.

It takes time to smoke a cigar, and still more time to smoke three or four or five cigars. It is not always that a man can smoke in the presence of ladies, or in the common apartments of the home where he finds himself. If he is a guest where there is no smell of stale tobacco in the house, he needs to leave pleasant companionships and go out of doors to enjoy his cigar, or be made uncomfortable by its lack. If he is at a hotel, or on a railroad train, he must seek the place of tobacco-users, which is often a filthy apartment where are sure to be found the vilest occupants of the establishment, whoever else is there. And as he is wait-



ing in a line leading up to the ticket office, or to the gate entrance to the place of outgoing cars, or sitting on the chairs of a preferred platform while watching a procession on some gala day, even a supposed gentlemanly tobacco smoker is liable to be puffing his cigar smoke into the face of a refined woman or a non-smoking gentleman near him in the line or on the platform in apparent utter unconsciousness of his obnoxious conduct—he is so used to it, and has so little thought of the comforts and preferences of others.

If tobacco-using were otherwise desirable, it would be indeed a pity that it forced a decent Christian man into the atmosphere and associations of the average railway smoking-car, or steamer smoking-room, and necessitated his remaining there, on a level for the time being, in his tastes and pursuits, with those who are there assembled. If a refined and sensible mother had no other inducement to strug-

gle and pray in dead earnest to keep her loved boy from the love of tobacco, she could find it in her desire to shield him from smoking-car and public smoking-room influences and companionships. The tobacco-user is in bondage by his habit to evil associations which he might otherwise avoid; and the necessity is, by that habit, upon him, of often separating himself from the influences of the purest and most refining society, and of having in their stead influences which, as far as they go, are polluting and debasing.

Tobacco-using holds back many young men of wealth and intellect and good moral character from doing as well as they can do—doing a great deal better and a great deal more than they do do. They sit and smoke, and think how much they have done, and how much they intend to do, and how pleasant it is to live without doing all the time, and—they take another cigar, and are more than satisfied with doing

nothing more. There is a deal of truth in the suggestion of George Trask, the veteran opposer of tobacco, that "a good cigar is the most *satisfying* thing in the world," that "a young man while he is smoking doesn't even want salvation."

There are multitudes of boys and young men all about us who are sure to be kept permanently upon a lower plane of performance and attainment, because of their lack of ambition and unrest and determined energy through the quieting and becalming influence of tobacco on their nerves and sensibilities, when they ought to be wide awake to their duty and their lack, and be struggling for success as for their lives. If there were no other reason why a fond mother should train her boy never to use tobacco, it is enough that by keeping him from its use she gives him a start ahead in comparison with his companions who do use it, and helps him to save all his nerves and sensibilities and

all his energies in their fullest and fairest play.

It is not an easy matter for a tobacco-user to break away from the bondage of his habit. Many a man has tried the experiment and failed. A boy ten years old said, seriously, to the writer, when the folly of tobacco-using was in discussion, "I wish I hadn't begun to smoke, but it's too late for me now to break off." That measured that boy's strength!

But, on the other hand, many a man has had the courage and the power to break away from his bondage, in this matter, when he was already more than fifty years old; and he has thereby gained in character and practical efficiency, as a man among men. The Rev. Dr. Henson is merely an example of what can be done by a man who will do what he feels he ought to do. Two instances of this sort have recently come to the knowledge of the writer, as showing the possible as well as the desir-

able. In both cases it was a Christian layman who found that his habit of tobacco-using made him offensive to those whom he desired to influence for good, and stood in the way of his being a helper to others. In both cases the child of God sought God's help in the struggle to overcome the habit that had so long held him captive, and was given, by faith, the victory.

These considerations, be it remembered, are apart, not only from any debatable question of morals, but from any question of the effect of tobacco on the health, or of its propriety on the score of expensiveness. These touch only the question of its desirableness. Granted, for argument's sake, that it would be right for boys to use tobacco if they wanted to. Granted that it would not be likely to prove injurious to their health. Granted that they could well afford to gratify their inclination in its cost. Is it desirable for them to form this habit, when its indulgence would inevitably de-

stroy their personal purity and cleanliness, would make them measurably offensive to the more refined and sensitive of those who are about them, would tend to deaden their sensibilities, and to diminish and limit their nervous force and activity, and would bring them into a bondage which shuts them away from much that is refining and elevating, and surrounds them with influences which are deteriorating, and companionships which are objectionable? If not, then now is the time for considering this thing and deciding what to do about it.

## **Taking Chances in Life**





## Taking Chances in Life

THERE is a sense in which "chance" enters into all the happenings of life. Yet it is important to understand at the start what "chance" is and what it is not, in order to discern the true place of chance or chances in one's proper plans and movements in the world.

A "chance" is that which falls, which befalls, which happens, which comes, as apart from all which is properly included in the preparations and anticipations of one's course. The etymology of the word "chance" is the same as that of "accident." If, therefore, the word be used as indicating a possibility of occurrences beyond human foresight, it is right to employ it as concerning every plan of life; for the possible is always an added element in

the calculation of the probable—as beyond the assured.

Napoleon as a military commander declared that, in every great battle, there is a time when the best laid plans of the most sagacious commander are of no avail in comparison with unlooked-for circumstances and unforeseen forces which are the happenings of the hour. In this sense “it is the unexpected which happens,” and which has to be looked out for.

It was this way before our day and before Napoleon’s day. The doubter and cynic, represented in Ecclesiastes as groping toward the light, thought for a while that chance had more to do with success than wisdom and skill. “I returned, and saw under the sun,” he says, “that the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, neither yet bread to the wise, nor yet riches to men of understanding, nor yet favor to men of skill; but time and chance happeneth to them all.”

In a true and proper sense, therefore, a man has to take his chances in life. Occurrences which he could not have anticipated will meet him in his progress, and he must do as best he can in view of them, when they appear. But there is another sense in which the word "chance" is employed which is wholly unjustifiable, yet in which it is more often used than in its correct sense. "Chance" in the sense of "luck" is not a factor in life, and it ought not to be recognized as existing among things which are or which may be. Counting on it, in this sense, is inevitably harmful both in fact and in tendency.

Chance as an unforeseen happening is a great reality. Chance as causeless luck, or as a favoring or non-favoring fortune, is an absurdity—or worse. That which falls or befalls, which occurs or comes to pass, must have had a starting place and a starting cause. Even Voltaire declared: "Chance [in the sense of luck] is void of sense; noth-

ing can exist without a cause." Counting the chances, or risking the chances, is therefore wise or foolish, helpful or harmful, according as it is intended or is understood.

He who recognizes the unfailing supervision and control of all the forces of nature, and of all the courses of history, by the wise and loving sovereignty of Him in whom "we live and move, and have our being," realizes that all chance and happening and accident are subject to both the knowledge and the consent of God, and that the falling of every leaf and the turning of every card or die, happen alike by God's will and favor.

One of the proverbs supposed to have been selected by Solomon says:

"The lot is cast into the lap;  
But the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord."

And lest it should be thought that it is only in the disposition of larger and more important matters that the Lord condescends

to have a part, a greater than Solomon adds: "Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and not one of them shall fall [shall chance to drop] on the ground without your Father: but the very hairs of your head are all numbered [each separate hair having its place in God's knowledge]. Fear not therefore; ye [and all your interests, great and small] are of more value than many sparrows." In this light it is that every chance, or accident, or happening, is a special, or a particular, providence, a signal exercise of God's directing power. To count the chances in this light is to consider what God is likely to do for us personally out of his love for us, and out of his love for truth and right.

To this day, in the East, the casting of the lot into the lap is the approved mode of ascertaining the decision of the Lord concerning any matter of difference; for the idea of God's superintending providence in things large and small is of universal prev-

alence among Orientals. When noisy and violent discussion has failed to bring about an agreement as to the apportioning of the loads to their camels, or as to the division of bakhsheesh received by them, the excited Arabs will squat on the ground together, and will cast the lot into their laps, by the use of rude dice or of marked pebbles, accepting the decision as the voice of God; and so now, as in the days of Solomon,

“The lot causeth contentions to cease,  
And parteth between the mighty.”

Nor is this practice entirely unknown in our Christian countries of the West. An amicable division of property, where both parties are desirous only of that which is right and fair, is often arrived at by lot in one form or another; and this with the feeling that the decision is thus referred to the Lord, because the point in dispute is beyond the wisdom of the parties at issue.

If this idea of chance and lot were to prevail, how different would be all counting

of the chances, and all uses of the lot! In the risks of business, in the dangers of travel, in the perils of disease, in the possibilities of gain or of amusement, the thought would be, What does God plan for me? What is to be God's ordering? How can I learn God's decision? Yet any other idea than this, of chance or luck, is in itself godless, and is in its tendency destructive of sound faith and of wise works. There is literally no exception to this principle—in the sphere of labor or of recreation, among old or young.

Just here is the chief objection to all games of chance whatsoever. It can hardly be said, on the one hand, that the shuffling of cards or the rattling of dice, in the gambling-room, the parlor, or the nursery, is intended, or can be construed, as a reverent appeal to God for his intervention between the contestants. On the other hand, it must be admitted that it is injurious to one's spiritual nature and to one's mental

fibre to indulge the feeling that there is any such thing in the universe as bald luck, or as causeless chance, on which one can depend for success—in labor or in recreation. Obviously, there is a deadening of the sense of dependence on divine guidance and support through any such vicious sentiment.

Moreover, it tends to lessen one's energy, and to diminish his reliance on his own honest exertions, if the conviction grows on him that his luck may at any moment counterbalance the gain of his best endeavors, or the loss through his shiftless neglect. To cast the lot into the lap—or anywhere else—as is usually done, with the thought that the whole disposing thereof is *not* specifically of the Lord, is not only to ignore God as the cause of all happenings, but it is to put luck into the place of God, and so far to cultivate the belief that luck, and not God, is our dependence in the affairs of life.

The fact must be recognized, however,



that very many excellent persons see no harm in card-playing, or in similar games of chance, and deem it unwise and ill-judged in others to object to them. There is no lack of examples of their constant use among Christians of all denominations, and in every profession and occupation of life, including clergymen and teachers, and parents who are willing that their children should, like themselves, enjoy card-playing in their homes or with friends outside. It cannot, therefore, fairly be claimed that card-playing and other games of chance are indulged in only by those who entertain laxer views as to morals in conduct.

Perhaps the popular agreement for the use of cards, as in whist or euchre, will be recognized as forcibly presented in this letter of inquiry from an intelligent clergyman in Iowa, received by the writer of these pages:

“In my home, in the early days, I was taught that card-playing was dangerous to

good morals, and not conducive to a healthy and vigorous Christian experience. For many years I have continued under that impression. Having now children of my own to teach, and other children committed to my care, I am anxious that my views in this direction shall be clear and consistent.

“The ‘best people’ where I live play cards, and teach their children to play them. Many of these are Christian people. In earnest conversation with one of these a short time since, I gained these facts: In the early years he lived in New York State, and was taught in the home that cards were dangerous. He was not permitted to use them. He came West, became a Christian, and for sixteen years has played cards in every conceivable place, has never received injury thereby himself, nor seen any evil growing out of the game to others. He looks back upon his early training as wrong, declares that he was ‘defrauded of his rights’ in his youth, and that any Christian,

or any church, that takes the position that card-playing is wrong or dangerous takes a position that is 'senseless and altogether indefensible.'

"Gamblers, he assured me, no longer use cards, as other and better ways of gambling have taken their place. That he was not afraid of cards, I might know from the fact that he had them in his home, and himself had taught his boys how to play them. I do not wish to be behind the times and hold fast to my old-fogy notions that ought to be abandoned, and so I seek counsel from you. Have cards been regenerated? Is it true that 'nine-tenths of the members of the Christian Church use them, and advocate their use'? Is it safe for me to give them to my boys, and teach them how to use them? A new and extremely fascinating game, 'Progressive Euchre,' is booming in many places, am I borrowing trouble in being anxious concerning its introduction here?"

That whist and euchre and other games with cards are games of chance, cannot properly be denied. That a measure of skill can be shown in them is true, and that there are "good players" and "poor players" is unmistakable. Yet, in the long run, the element of chance is the chief factor in these games, and this it is that gives zest in their playing. The question as to the element of chance in such games has been again and again tested by experiment, and practically always with the same result.

Awhile ago, the experiment on an extended scale, was made in this way. Skilled players were pitted against skilled players. Again, skilled players were pitted against unskilled players. Yet again, unskilled players were pitted against unskilled players. In a large series of games, say a thousand in number, it was found that the percentage of games won, in the one case and in the other, by the one sort of players or the other, did not materially differ. Chance,

rather than skill, was the determining factor. Whatever prominence, therefore, is to be accorded to skill in card-playing, these games must be reckoned as games of chance.

Gamblers have *not* generally abandoned the use of cards, even though they have supplemented their use with dice and various other devices. Neither have churches generally, as yet, agreed to insist on card-playing as a test of good and regular standing in their membership. The expediency of card-playing may, therefore, properly be considered apart from the preferences of professional gamblers, or the practice of one-tenth or nine-tenths of church-members, East or West.

The primary and most obvious objection to card-playing is, as has been already stated, the fact that it is chance playing; that it gives prominence to chance, or "luck," as a large element in success or failure. One of the most important practical truths to impress on the mind of every

child is, that he has to depend—under God—on his own honest exertions for getting on and getting up in the world. One of the most injurious ideas—always injurious, if not absolutely fatal—in the mind of every child is, that it is “luck” which is to carry him along in life, and that he is individually lucky, or unlucky, in comparison with his fellows.

A difference at this point is a vital difference in every crisis time of one's existence; and all life is but a long series of crisis times. It shows itself in a boy's or a girl's plays, studies, work. It shows itself in a young person's setting out in the world; in his choice of occupation, or in his decision concerning different offers of employment. It shows itself in a man's conduct of business, or in his labors in the line of his profession; it affects him in all his ideas of investments and money-making.

There can, indeed, hardly be named a

single dividing line of equal moment, in its practical bearings on all the affairs of one's personal life, with that which separates the two questions: Am I to succeed in life by the blessing of God on my own endeavors? or am I to succeed in life by my luck? In view of the magnitude of this principle, it behooves every Christian parent to train his children to have a care to be on the right side of the division; and to this end all games and conversations, as well as all study and work, should tend.

There are minor games of chance which help along in the wrong way in the household; but none of these are to be compared, in prominence and popularity, in the home circle, with cards. For centuries, playing-cards have been a chief agency in training the young to give a large place to "luck" in all their calculations of life; and the playing of cards has been more effective in the direction of promoting a dependence on "luck" than all the wise words of parents

and teachers who approved of card-playing could have in the opposite direction. The love of stock-gambling and of grain-corners and of margin-buying and of speculations generally, is a natural outgrowth of the principle of card-playing. Indeed, the common talk about both the speculations and the card-playing, as "not wholly dependent on chance," has as much basis in the one case as in the other. Whatever part knowledge, or experience, or skill, may have in determining the issue, in either the one sphere or the other, it is "luck" or chance which really decides the case.

Very early in life a child learns, from his accustomed games, to expect success as a result of his care and skill, or as a consequence of his favoring luck, and this inevitably affects, more or less sensibly, all his course in life. If on the one hand his games are such as jack-straws and hopscotch, or, on the other hand, such as cards and dice, he is sure to feel the influence and



tendency of these amusements and recreations respectively.

As showing that the objection to card-playing is not wholly a result of defective education, nor yet a mere prejudice resulting from early puritanic teachings and practice, the writer of these pages will say that he was accustomed to play cards in his youth, without any prohibition on the subject from his parents. Wholly from his own observation of the effects of card-playing on those who indulged in it among the "best people" of his acquaintance, he abandoned it while yet not even a nominal church-member, and while a large majority of his companions continued in the practice. From that time to this, all his observation and experience in varied spheres of life have confirmed his conviction that the influence and tendency of card-playing are not to be approved, even in the best home circles and under the most favorable conditions. Yet the writer is aware that many

among the best and most intelligent of his acquaintances think quite differently, and entertain opinions opposed to his, as based on their observations and experience.

One objection to card-playing is its liability to engross attention and to occupy time unduly. In this all games of chance differ from all games of skill. As in the case of wine and tobacco so in games of chance, the use tends to the abuse. One does not necessarily tire of the pastime when he has reached a reasonable limit, as he does in games of skill or in ordinary employments. While there are those who habitually exercise self-control, and who will not exceed certain hours in such pastime, the tendency is in the other direction, and has to be recognized as a positive danger to the young.

Any person who has observed this thing for years in varied spheres cannot have a doubt as to the facts. In students' rooms, in summer and winter hotels, in long journeys on railroad trains, in the saloons and

smoking-rooms of ocean steamers, in army camps, in war prisons, in social clubhouses, in all such places, those who play cards and rattle dice never tire of the occupation, as of ordinary employments. Having been at it five days and evenings, or five weeks or months, they are just as ready to be at it again on the sixth as they were to begin it on the first. If indeed card-playing be only a harmless recreation, it must be admitted that there are few card players, though there are some, who do not give more time to it than they ought to devote to any recreation, and that there is a strong temptation, and a positive tendency in the game, to do this.

Moreover, because chance prevails in card-playing, card-playing naturally tends to an increased interest in a share in ventures where there is positive profit or loss at stake in the result. So manifest is this tendency in card-playing, that many a social club prohibits card-playing in its club-

house, lest gambling should accompany it; and this in clubs where the managers permit card-playing freely in their own homes.

Raffling in connection with charitable fairs, and with benevolent undertakings, is a common form of gambling approved by many, and which has most pernicious results. This must be considered in any examination of the evil tendency of the element of chance in the affairs of life. Raffling is a form of lottery which does not differ materially from the grosser forms of that evil, securing blanks to most, and prizes to a few, and ensuring disappointment to many, with an increased desire on the part of all to try another chance.

The writer of these pages has had occasion to observe the evil results of raffling for many years, and on many persons of his acquaintance. In his early years it was a far more common practice than now. Not only in church fairs, but in various enter-

prises in the community, and in the disposing of cattle, and horses, and houses, and jewelry, it was a popular mode of exciting and indulging a desire to venture one's luck and take his chances.

A single illustration may be given as showing what he has seen to be its inevitable tendency. A young man of his acquaintance who was an active member of a prominent church, and who had recently married a lovely Christian young woman, took a ticket in a raffle at a church fair and won the first prize. He was delighted. Many of his friends envied him. His mother, however, told him that she feared that his success would lead him to value luck rather than skill. He laughed at her fears, and thought himself in no danger. He tried in other raffles. He drew prize after prize. He was called a wonderfully lucky fellow. Finally he drew as a prize a fine horse. No one knew, however, of the many blanks he had drawn meantime. He

seemed, at the same time, to be prosperous in business.

But one day his place of business was closed. It was found that in order to obtain ready money for tickets in raffles he had mortgaged his entire stock of goods, and then had forged the name of his father-in-law to promissory notes, and now was a fugitive from justice, deserting his home and family. His mother's fears proved to be not wholly groundless. Nor does his case stand alone. In its nature it is typical of many another in the sphere of the writer's observation.

There are those who do not see that there is any essential evil in games of chance, nor even in risking small amounts on the issue of a game, or of a raffle or other form of lottery. A prominent bishop of the Church of England said publicly awhile ago that he could see no necessary harm in gambling or betting. He was sure that there was no command in the Bible against it.

So far as that is concerned, there is no command in the Bible against eating green apples in cholera times, or of trying to feed a hyena with peanuts out of one's open hand.

A Christian woman in Mississippi, some years ago, stated the case, with some of its difficulties, in these words to the writer of these pages:—

“I think that all Christian workers are, at times, puzzled to give a satisfactory answer to the question so frequently coming to them, at least in this section of the country: ‘What, after all, is really wrong in gambling, or in buying lottery tickets?’ A young man asks me to lay the following case before you, only with a sincere desire to use your answer for the benefit of others; for he, long ago, settled the question for himself: ‘Suppose I feel need of recreation, and find myself in possession of five dollars, which I have an absolute right to use in that way, all other claims upon me

having been settled to the full extent. I can go to the opera, I may spend it in theatres, in concerts, in drives, go on an excursion, subscribe for a magazine, or buy books. Suppose I conclude that it will afford me more enjoyment to risk just that sum at the gambling-table or in lottery tickets,—why not ?

“Again, a schoolgirl of fifteen came to me in this way: ‘You say that one great reason why the lottery is wrong is, that a man tries to get money for which he has given no equivalent. Now, suppose a man insures his life for \$5,000, pays one premium, and dies,—wherein does that differ from the lottery? He gave no equivalent for the \$5,000 his family enjoy.’ Another chimed in: ‘Yes, and if he paid a number of years, he was like a man who buys a good many lottery tickets before he wins a prize.’ Still another added: ‘I don’t see the difference. In the life insurance they all throw in, and the one who dies first



gets the prize; and it is the same with the lottery or at cards,—they all put in money, and are willing that one shall get it.' You know that we are next door to the great Louisiana plague-spot [this was before the strong arm of the National Government had removed that], and its cancer roots are spreading on all sides; and even the children buy tickets, and are primed with sophistries in its defense. And the corruption will not stop with its next-door neighbors, either."

The main evil in gambling in any form, is, as has repeatedly been said, in its introduction of the idea of "chance" or "luck" as a factor in human affairs, as over against the idea of a fitting reward of intelligent and persistent personal endeavor. It is well for a child to learn at the beginning of life that his success or failure depends, under God, upon his knowledge and skill and labor and fidelity, in whatever sphere of endeavor he is exerting himself. It is ill

for a child to gain the idea, from his amusements or from his more serious occupations, that there is such a thing as good luck or bad luck in the universe, and that he may be a gainer or loser therefrom. And that which is true of the child, so far, is true of the man; he is helped by every experience of the value of honest and faithful personal service in one direction or in another; he is harmed by every experience that tends to cultivate a reliance upon blind chance, or luck, as a means of gain or attainment.

On this point the teachings of sound reason and the testimony of the ages are agreed. Gambling in any form whatsoever is at variance with sound business principles, and its tendency must inevitably be always pernicious. In the progress of centuries, gambling has come to be an outlawed occupation under the best governments of the world,—civil governments, military governments, school and family governments. It is forbidden in the better

regulated social clubs of the more civilized cities of Europe and America. Where it is still tolerated, it is seen as a moral "plague spot," bringing indolence, unnatural excitement, despair, and death, as its concomitants.

The difference between a reliance on chance or luck, and a recognition of the uncertainties of the future in ordinary business enterprises, would seem to be one that a child could understand, and that a man ought to be ashamed to ignore. Planning for the future, and guessing at the future, are not one and the same thing. A man who buys a stock of goods in the reasonable expectation of selling them, has to take the risks of the future; and this he may do legitimately. A man who bets as to the outcome of another man's investment takes what he calls the "chance of the future"; but in so doing he does not do a legitimate business. Life insurance, or fire insurance, is not in the realm of gam-

bling; it is in the realm of a legitimate and well-understood estimating of the risks of the future by the company that insures. This distinction ought to be clear to both young and old in Mississippi and in Massachusetts. It will be, if they stop to look at it intelligently.

As to the question of public opinion and of the common practice of church-members generally, nothing more can now be said in favor of card-playing than could have been said, early in the century, in favor of lotteries, as also of distilleries, and other means of money-getting now generally condemned. Many a church building in New England was erected by money raised for the purpose by virtue of a special act of the Legislature. A fine public library building in a Western state was pointed out to the writer as built by funds raised through a lottery, or raffle, organized for that specific purpose. The added fact was mentioned that five suicides were an inci-

dental result of the drawing of blanks in that benevolent lottery.

Gambling in its various forms, such as betting, and raffling, and the lottery, has been under discussion for many years, and the consensus of the world's best opinion is practically against it. It is ostracized in all choicer social, civil, and military circles. A man who is known to be a gambler is counted as below the better standards in the community in which he moves, and by which he is measured. The world's progress is manifestly away from gambling as a permissible practice. It is no longer a "border-line" practice; it is clearly well over the line of debatable customs. But the use of cards, without the accompaniment of gambling, is still deemed as on the border; this is why its discussion has a place here.

Card-playing does, or does not, tend to promote a measure of reliance on chance, or luck, in the affairs of ordinary life, and

to the spending of time unreasonably in such playing. This does or does not tempt a young person also to try his chances in one way and another in raffles, or lotteries, or betting, or other forms of gambling. As a man is convinced concerning this tendency and temptation, he will want to conform his individual action, and his example before those who look up to him, to that course which he honestly believes to be the best one.

**Which Side of the Theatre Door ?**





## Which Side of the Theatre Door?

ONE of the strongest claims made for the theatre as an institution by its wiser and more earnest advocates or defenders is, that it exists for the display of dramatic representations, in which representation there is nothing essentially evil, while, on the other hand, it may if rightly used be made a powerful means of uplifting popular thought and action. In view of this truth, it is said to be better to endeavor to elevate and purify the theatre by Christian coöperation and guidance, than for Christians to stand wholly aloof from it while it is sure to exist.

It is further affirmed that a large portion of our best secular literature is an outgrowth of the theatre, and that this literature is one of the results of that institution

and must be taken into account in any proper estimate of its influence. While its friends admit that there is a measure of evil as well as of good in the composition of this agency and of its resultant influence, as of every other human instrumentality, they insist that it ought to be reviewed with discrimination rather than with unqualified censure. This is plausible on the face of it, but how does it bear the test of examination, historically?

Before this examination, however, it is well to recognize the fact that dramatic literature is not necessarily dependent on the exhibition of the drama, closely as they have been associated in the passing ages. Many a drama in form has been written, that has never been acted. Many an appreciative lover of dramatic literature has never witnessed a representation of a drama on the theatre stage. There are lovers and students of Shakespeare's plays who will not witness their acting, simply because

they are unwilling to have their standard and ideals of the great poet's work lowered by the performances of professional actors. Hence a discussion of the theatre as an institution does not necessarily involve the drama as a literary production; nor does condemnation of the former necessarily carry with it even a reflection on the latter.

The theatre had its origin and its early history as a religious agency. This was the case in ancient Egypt and Greece and Rome, before the days of Christianity. "The spectacular purpose was . . . a religious one. . . . The muse of tragedy gazed from her mask on all orders of her native realm, gathered as for a festive liturgy, an ovation of æstheticism heightened by an enthusiasm of religion which knew no sects to divide, no puritanism to estrange." It was thus when the drama was so prominent in the worship of Bacchus as a pagan god.

So it was for centuries in the history of

the Christian Church. Throughout Europe the drama was chiefly in illustration of the Christian "mysteries," and the Bible story or the many legends of the saints supplied the main theme of the tragedy and comedy of the theatre. As a careful reviewer of its history has said of the stage in Europe generally: "From the fall of the Roman Empire to the end of the thirteenth century, Latin continued to be the exclusive dramatic vehicle. Thus the drama had scanty interest for the common people, and remained either a didactic form of worship, or, as in the case of Hrosvitha and the extant plays of Terence, an amusement of the learned leisure of the cloister."

What, on the whole, was the influence of the theatre as an agency of sound instruction and of innocent amusement, while under the best of human influences as a recognized and sanctioned religious agency? Look to the testimony of its intelligent contemporary observers, in different succeeding

ages. Of the great classic writers, Plato and Aristotle and Ovid and Juvenal and Tacitus, and others, wrote strongly against it,—not merely against its incidental evils and abuses, but against its influence and tendency as an institution. And gradually the theatre came under condemnation in the Jewish and Christian world, even while it was still, in a sense, under religious control.

More than two centuries and a half ago, a published list of “authorities against the stage” included “the united testimony of the Jewish and Christian Churches; the deliberate acts of fifty-four ancient and modern general, national, and provincial councils and synods, both of the Eastern and Western Churches; the condemnatory sentence of seventy-one ancient fathers, and one hundred and fifty (then) modern Catholic and Protestant writers.” And down to the present day, it must be admitted by the most enthusiastic admirers of the theatre

that there are many intelligent Christian persons who stand opposed to the theatre in its entirety, as well as in its more objectionable characteristics. What is the underlying reason for all this? Why is it that the theatre came under condemnation while it was in religious control, and fails of universal approval now that it is wholly on its own merits as an applicant for public favor?

The objections more commonly urged against the theatre are, that its exciting exhibit of the grosser passions; its deadening influence through the display of unreal crime and suffering and sorrow, and of simulated emotions; its fascinations and temptings by means of scenic effect and of inevitable accessories and accompaniments,—are dangerous and harmful to the purest-minded spectators, and tend to the permanent injury of those who are most susceptible to influences of evil. Nor are these objections unworthy of the most serious consideration by the Christian moralist.

Yet, as they have been questioned or qualified, or counted as exceptional and partial, or as possibly remediable, by intelligent Christian advocates of the theatre, it is well to look back of them all, or below them all, in order to recognize a radical and sweeping objection to the institution of the theatre at its best, in the inadmissibility of the very profession of a dramatic actor as right and proper, under any circumstances.

This chief and all-prevailing objection to the theatre is, that the profession of an actor is in and of itself unnatural, baleful, and radically and universally wrong; and that because this is so no change of controlling influences can make the institution which depends on and represents that profession an agency of substantial good, or worthy of Christian countenance and support. On the face of it, the profession of an actor stands all by itself in demanding of its votary that his main purpose and endeavor shall be to seem what he is not,

to appear something else than his real self; and herein lies the essential and irremediable evil of this profession.

The very terms "hypocrisy" and "playing a part on the stage" are identical in their earlier signification. "Hypocrite" is, in both its Greek and Latin forms, a designation of an actor in the theatre. Yet it does not, by any means, follow from this that every "actor" in the theatre is a "hypocrite" in the ordinary sense of this latter term, as applied to one's moral character and personal sincerity of motive and conduct. It does follow, however, that the stigma attaching to the terms "hypocrite" or "actor" is a natural outgrowth of the universal conviction that in everything and always it is better for a man to be true to himself, to do his own work in the world, and to fill his own place, than for him to play a part, to strive to be another than his own self, and to seek to seem what in reality he is not. And this universal conviction



stands, in opposition to the life-profession of a dramatic actor, whatever tolerance may be conceded to occasional and purely exceptional amateur acting.

An actor may, indeed, have a great deal of personality. It is, in fact, hardly possible for one to be a successful actor without a large degree of personality; as it is also true that rare ability, and sometimes commanding genius, enters into the power of the successful actor. But all this personality, all this ability, all this genius, must be devoted to giving the actor the appearance of another self than his own in the profession to which he has consecrated his best powers; and this course inevitably tends to the limiting and cramping of his personality, and to the unworthy employment and fettering of his genius and ability.

That which might have been a power for good in creation, or in original performance, is given wholly to imitation or simulation; and this too, more commonly, in

the sphere of the lower nature rather than of the higher, or at all events in the lower as well as in the higher; for the essential requirements of dramatic action call for the portrayal of the more violent and unworthy passions, rather than of the gentler and worthier virtues. A man who is, perhaps, at heart a good and a true man, and who has exceptional capabilities of good, devotes himself to seeming a bad man, and to exhibiting the semblance of the vilest passions or of the most abhorrent crimes. How can such a course fail of injury to a noble nature? Even if it in no degree lowers the tone of that nature, it inevitably restrains it within limitations all unworthy of its powers and destiny.

It is a well-known fact in medical science, that the persistent simulation of disease tends to produce the disorder simulated; that the human system, in fact, comes to adapt itself in large measure to the will-pressure which is put upon it by its indweller. If

this be true with the physical system, how much truer with the more keenly sensitive and more quickly responsive moral nature. Let a pure man, or a pure woman, deliberately plan and repeatedly endeavor to think and feel and seem to act as if impure, or even as if dallying with temptation and weighing the possible gains of impurity and crime,—and can it be that impurity and crime will continue to have the same abhorrence of mien to such a person, as if their very semblance had been counted ever abhorrent? No! no! if such persons remain pure and virtuous,—as many actors and actresses have remained, to their lasting credit,—it is in spite of their improper profession, and not as an illustration of its natural and ordinary tendency.

In his merging of his personality in simulation as a very essential of his profession, or of his “art,” the actor’s profession or art differs from that of any other. There is nothing like it in the true mission, or in the

best work, of any honest or reputable profession. There is nothing akin to it in any other approved sphere of art. A man may describe evil or portray it in literature, in poetry, in music, in painting, in sculpture, without putting himself into that exhibit of evil, without merging his personality in another personality; but in the art of the actor he who would portray the tyrant, the murderer, the adulterer, the seducer, or the betrayer of a sacred trust, must, in order to be the best actor, strive to think and feel and speak and act as if he were himself this very evil-doer. Shakespeare himself seems to recognize the essential unworthiness of such an art when he makes Hamlet say:

“ Is it not monstrous that this player here,  
But in a fiction, in a dream of passion,  
Could force his soul so to his own conceit  
That from her working all his visage wann'd,  
Tears in his eyes, distraction in his aspect,  
A broken voice, and his whole function suiting  
With forms to his conceit? and all for nothing!”

An incidental confirmation of this truth is given in the intelligent testimony of the distinguished Hungarian traveller, Arminius Vambery, who journeyed through various Oriental countries under the guise of an Oriental. In his story, as given anew in English, he says of the effect on one's self of such a life of simulation as he led so successfully: "That double-facedness in which a man lives, thoroughly aware of his real nature in spite of his outward disguise, cannot be maintained very long with impunity. The constant concealment of his own sentiments, the absorbing work of his assimilation to the utmost of elements quite foreign, produce their slow and silent but sure effect in altering the man himself in course of time, whether he wishes it or no. In vain does the disguised traveller inwardly rebel against the influences and impressions which are wearing away his real self. The impressions of the past lose more and more their hold on him until they fade away,

leaving the traveller hopelessly struggling in the toils of his own fiction, and the rôle he has assumed soon becomes second nature with him." The fact that Vambery recognized so clearly the tendency of his life of simulation, was a help to him in his recovery of his real self. The fact that many an actor does not perceive the tendency of his life of simulation stands in the way of his ever recovering his real self. He remains an unconscious actor to the end—as often is shown in his ordinary photographs on exhibition.

An English writer some time since computed that Mr. (now Sir) Henry Irving had committed at least fifteen thousand murders on the stage, while Mr. Barry Sullivan had added at least two thousand more stage murders than this to his list; that Mr. Charles Wyndham had been divorced from twenty-eight hundred wives—on the stage; that Mrs. Bancroft had in the same public place been "foully betrayed or abducted"

thirty-two hundred times; that Miss Ada Cavendish had been "betrayed, deserted, or abducted," fifty-six hundred times; and so on, along the list of popular actors.

Can any intelligent person, any person of refined sensibilities or with a fair knowledge of psychological laws and influences, believe for one moment that the deliberate and purposed indulgence in simulated evil to any such extent has had no effect in deadening the moral nature of the actor to the enormity of the offenses simulated, or dallied with? Would it be in any degree strange if those who have thus simulated deep emotions in so many different characters with different persons at different times, were to look with more leniency on a corresponding change in their closest personal relations with others in actual life. After an engagement of a hundred days, or a thousand, with one company, or with one partner, would it seem every way unnatural to seek another engagement for another

like time? Even if this never did happen, it would seem as if it might.

To be a good actor, (and surely the actor's profession is to be seen at its best in the persons of its greatest representatives, not in its poorer,) the real self must be merged or lost in the simulated self during all the time of acting—whether before the public or in preparatory rehearsals. The good self of the actor's personality must for the time being be lost in the evil self of the character acted. And what an effect is this! The greater the actor the completer the transference of self, and the profounder the evil! Hear Charlotte Brontë's graphic but terrible description of the peerless Rachel's acting in the part of Phèdre: "For a while—a long while—I thought it was only a woman, though a unique woman, who moved in might and grace before this multitude. By and by I recognized my mistake. Behold! I found upon her something neither of woman nor of man;



in each of her eyes sat a devil. These evil forces bore her through the tragedy, kept up her feeble strength—for she was but a frail creature; and as the action rose and the stir deepened, how wildly they shook her with the passion of the pit! They wrote Hell on her straight, haughty brow. They turned her voice to the note of torment. They writhed her regal face to a demoniac mask. Hate and Murder and Madness incarnate she stood."

And this is a woman's tribute of *praise* for a woman's rarest success in the art and profession of an actor. Would any true and pure woman intelligently crave the power of such a hellish transformation of self as this? crave it for herself, or for one whom she loved and honored? Can any true and pure man or woman intelligently approve as a life-profession the actor's endeavor, after such power of transformation hellward?

Even if truly noble characters are, in ex-

ceptional instances, represented by leading actors of the stage, it may be said unqualifiedly that rarely, if ever, has an eminent actor or actress, in modern times, made or rested a reputation on the portrayal of a truly noble character (not including in this estimate, of course, the exceptional remnant of the original religious drama in the Passion Play of Ober Ammergau). If a man or woman tries at one time to seem better and at another time to seem worse than his or her real self, the tendency of such acting as a whole must inevitably be toward the lower rather than toward the higher standard,—since it is always easier to go down hill than to go up. If in the Passion Play, for example, the same man were to assume in alternation the diverse characters of Jesus and Judas, the effect of his acting would be more likely to give a show of Judas than of Jesus in his face and bearing, if not, indeed, in his character.

Is there wonder, then, that all along

through the ages there have been indications of well-founded hostility to, and an abhorrence of, the profession of an actor, even among those who themselves approved and sustained the theatre itself?

Among the ancient Spartans, only an alien or a slave could be degraded to an actor's profession. Solon denounced that profession in ancient Greece, as "tending, by its simulation of false character, and by its expression of sentiment not genuine or sincere, to corrupt the integrity of human dealings." Under the Roman Republic, he who pursued the profession of an actor "became in the eye of the law *infamis* (disreputable) and incapable of holding any honorable office." Under the Roman Empire also the legal ban was still upon the actor, as satirized by Tertullian, when he said: "What perversity! They love whom they abuse; they depreciate whom they approve; they magnify the art; they mark with infamy the artist. What a condemna-

tion, that one should be vilified on account of those things through which he is held to win merit. Aye, and what a confession of the evil of the thing it is, that its doers, even when most accepted, are not left without the mark of infamy." And so with only varying degrees of difficulty, down to the present day, the professional actor, even when most honored as an actor, has had to struggle for a full moral recognition as worthy according to his personal worth.

A favorite mode of meeting objections to the modern theatre is by the rejoinder that the objector, in the pulpit, at the editorial desk, or in the chair of ethics, is not himself a theatre-goer, and therefore is incompetent to pass upon the nature and influence of the agency on which he comments. If indeed the chief objection to the theatre be that its tendency is to lessen the mental and moral sensibilities of the actor and of its ordinary frequenter, the question might well be asked, How long must an

observer be under this benumbing influence before he shall become most competent to pass on it? But waiving that question, it ought to be admitted by all that the testimony of experienced and skilled dramatic critics, of prominent theatre managers, and of veteran actors, cannot be called that of unintelligent or hostile observers and critics of this profession.

Mr. Clement Scott, a leading theatrical critic of the London Press, prominent also as an author and as a traveller, was asked, when he had been more than twenty years a close observer of the theatre and actors in that metropolis, to give his matured views of the stage as a place for a pure-minded girl to make a livelihood and to pursue dramatic art, and his answer was: "A woman may take a header into a whirlpool and be miraculously saved—but then she may be drowned. If a girl knows how to take care of herself, she can go anywhere; but I should be sorry to expose modesty to

the shock of that worst kind of temptation, a frivolous disregard of womanly purity. One out of a hundred may be safe; but then she must hear things that she had better not listen to, and witness things she had better not see. In every class of life women are exposed to danger and temptations, but far more in the theatre than elsewhere. All honor and praise to them when they brave it out." *That* view of the case, by a trained and competent observer, was hardly calculated to induce a lover of his fellows to give any more encouragement than he was compelled to, to a profession with such exceptional risks to character in it.

For this adverse criticism Mr. Scott was naturally severely censured by actors and their friends, but a number of years later he renewed his extended comments after maturer study and reflection, and his conclusions were in no degree more favorable to the profession he knew so much about.

"Stage life," said Mr. Scott, "according

to my experience, has a tendency to deaden the finer feelings, to crush the inner nature of men and women, and to substitute artificiality and hollowness for sincerity and truth; and, mind you, I speak from an intimate experience of the stage, extending over thirty-seven years." He speaks as if he knew something about his subject. He cannot be sneered at as judging without due knowledge.

"It is nearly impossible for a woman to remain pure who adopts the stage as a profession. Everything is against her. The freedom of life, of speech, of gesture, which is the rule behind the curtain, renders it almost impossible for a woman to preserve that simplicity of manner which is, after all, her greatest charm. The whole life is artificial and unnatural to the last degree, and therefore an unhealthy life to live.

"But what is infinitely more to be deplored is that a woman who endeavors to keep her purity is almost of necessity fore-

doomed to failure in her career. It is an awful thing to say, and it is still more terrible that it is true, but no one who knows the life of the green room will dare deny it."

While admitting that, in spite of all these difficulties and degrees, there *are* men and women who live pure lives even with such surroundings, Mr. Scott says that this "does not remove the great temptations from the weaker brethren." He adds: "I am not a canting prig or a Pharisee who makes broad his phylacteries, and says, 'Thank God, I am not as other men are.' The temptation of the stage is, and has been, quite as bad for me as for any one else, if not worse. It would disorder any life and shipwreck any temperament, however religious, to have your whole mind devoted to the showy and alluring for thirty-seven years."

A few years ago, in a symposium on the "Moral Influence of the Drama" in the North American Review, there were papers



from such well-known friends of the theatre as the veteran actor John Gilbert, the experienced and successful theatre manager A. M. Palmer, and the distinguished author and dramatic critic William Winter. They surely will be accepted by friends of the theatre as men who are competent to defend it.

Mr. Gilbert said: "I believe the present condition of the drama, both from a moral and an artistic point of view, to be a subject for regret. A large number of our theatres are managed by speculators who have no love for true art, and who, in the production of attractions, consider only the question of dollars and cents. With that class it seems to matter little whether a play has any literary merit; it is sufficient if it is 'sensational' and full of 'startling situations.' Many of the plays that have been adapted from the French are open to the severest criticism on the ground of immorality. I say, as an actor, without any

hesitation, that such plays have a very bad influence on nearly all people, especially on the young. Some argue that, even in these productions, vice is punished in the end; but when a play is filled with amorous intrigue, and fairly bristles with conjugal infidelity, when, in short, all the characters are infamous, there is no question in my mind but that its influence is bad."

Mr. Palmer, while of the opinion that, as a whole, the theatre of to-day is a decided improvement over that of former days, seemed to agree with Mr. Gilbert in the idea that the plays now in vogue are inferior to those of a former generation, and that the former generation of theatre-goers was an improvement on this one. While "the French authors write the best plays," and Victorien Sardou is "the greatest dramatist of our age," it is still true, as he views it, that "the most competent critics pronounce the French of Dumas and Sardou as vastly inferior to that of Voltaire and the

writers of the time of Louis XV." "Perhaps," said Mr. Palmer, suggestively, "the cause of this decadence is to be found in the public taste."

As to the subject-matter of modern plays generally, Mr. Palmer affirmed: "The chief themes of the theatre are now, as they have ever been, the passions of men: ambition leading to murder; jealousy leading to murder; lust leading to adultery and to death; anger leading to madness." And, as if in explanation of this fact, Mr. Winter added: "Christian ethics on the stage would be as inappropriate as Mr. Owen's Solon Shingle in the pulpit. . . . The worst mistake ever made by the stage, and the most offensive attitude ever assumed by it, are seen when—as in "Camille" and two or three similar plays—it tries to deal with what is really the function of the church,—the consequence of sin in the human soul. And here it makes a disastrous and mournful failure."

At a more recent date, Sir Henry Irving wrote an article in *The Forum* in which he attempted to show that theatrical acting is not in itself "degrading," as has been claimed by some eminent actors—not by poorly informed preachers. This very effort by such an eminent representative of the stage shows the importance attaching to the testimony of such competent witnesses as he attempts to refute. Sir Henry speaks of "the curious perversity which has prompted some distinguished artists to decry the art of acting," and cites in this line the examples of William Charles Macready, and Fanny Kemble. Macready would not permit his children to attend the theatre, because he so well knew its influence and tendency. He confessed that he felt the degrading influence of his art when he availed himself of his real grief over the recent death of his daughter, to give force to his simulating, before an audience, a father's grief over a dead child.

Fanny Kemble found acting "repulsive" to her best nature, "because it quenched the springs of natural emotion." She said of the actor's occupation, "a business which is incessant excitement and factitious emotion seems to me unworthy of man; a business which is public exhibition is unworthy of a woman." As to her personal experience she testified: "Never have I presented myself before an audience without a shrinking feeling of reluctance, or withdrawn from their presence without thinking the excitement I had undergone unhealthy and the personal exhibition odious."

It would seem as if this testimony from such actors were entitled to respect; but the strange thing about it is, that Mr. Irving, having had no such sensitiveness to be overcome or to be blunted, simply censures those who confess to it; and he cannot see why this imitation of real feeling on a stage should be any more debasing in its effect

on the actor than the analysis and formal representation of such feelings by a novelist or a poet in his writings. Yet the poet or the novelist merely describes the feelings which he would exhibit in his characters. He tells by his pen how those characters feel. But the actor simulates in his own person the feelings of love or of lust, of anger or of hatred, of ennobling or debasing sentiments, striving to feel, or to look and act as if he felt, these emotions; and in so doing he degrades his best nature, and lessens his responsive power to the influence of noble sentiments brought to bear upon him in the actual experiences of life. The dramatic author exercises his personality in the creation of a character; but the actor gives his personality to the mere imitation of a character created by the dramatist.

Mr. E. S. Willard, an actor standing high in his profession, in an interview with a representative of the Philadelphia Times,

gave his testimony as to the subjective influence of simulating the emotions and passions of others on the theatre stage:

“When I was playing ‘Jim the Penman’ in London, I developed on the fourth or fifth night a decided pain in the region of my heart. You remember that Jim the Penman dies of heart disease, and throughout the play is conscious that he may be suddenly carried off at any moment by this remorseless affection. There can be no doubt that a man in such a position would develop a morbid mental sensitiveness to the existence, or even the imagined existence, of any symptom apparently foretelling a crisis. This might reveal itself in an apprehensive cast of the eye or twitch of the muscles of the face, and to a conscientious actor would unquestionably afford one of the most important and difficult subjects of study. The relations between imagined heart disease, as in such a case, and the real disease which not impossibly, it seems to

me, might actually be developed from excess of apprehension, form a curious and interesting field of study, into which the actor can scarcely avoid following the specialist to some extent."

Referring to his experience in simulating the life and character of an evil-doer, he said: "Villains? Oh, yes! I have played villains for years. During the long run of a play, if my rôle is that of an accomplished villain, I think my face off the stage does show traces of, perhaps suggestions of, the diabolical channels in which my thoughts are trained so constantly to run." Yet, of course, Mr. Willard does not for one moment admit that this permitting the emotions to run in "diabolical channels" until the very expression of the face shows signs of it, has any tendency to lead him in similar courses of action! A man would hardly be the best judge as to the tendency of such a course in his own personality. Yet his admission, as far as it goes, has a



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value as confirming the opinions of those who as outsiders consider the principle involved and operative in a prolonged course of simulation.

There certainly is no need of any fancy sketch, on the part of men who are not theatre-goers, in order to make a case against the modern theatre, when such admissions as these are made by those who are attempting its formal defense. A seeker of instruction would have to be pretty badly off, who went to the theatre to learn lessons of godliness or personal purity, or to find the best influences under which to bring himself, if what such experts as these have to say about it be accepted as true.

As the chief objection, after all, to the theatre, is that it necessitates a life, or a profession, of acting—which is in itself an unworthy profession—the character of the plays performed is, at the best, of but secondary importance. Of course, a pure play is in itself better than an impure play. Yet

if every play were pure, the other, and the main, objection to the theatre would still have full force.

Granted that a drama as written and acted is in itself calculated to impress only the best of lessons, the fact still remains that it requires for its presentation the work of professional actors, while, as is here claimed, the profession of an actor is unworthy of the life energies of a true man or a true woman. Even though nine editors of religious journals and one hundred and thirteen prominent clergymen were to certify to the immaculate nature of a new dramatic rendering of the "Pilgrim's Progress," "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde," "The Sign of the Cross," "*La Pater*," including an impressive rendering of the Lord's Prayer on the stage, or "The Christian," or "The Old Homestead," would that justify a well-wisher of his fellows in giving countenance or support to an institution that cannot exist except by the degrading or the harmful

influencing of the actors required to impress a good lesson on pleasure seekers?

It would be a pity to have even good sermons preached from church pulpit or theatre stage, if such preaching must necessarily degrade or lower the moral standard of the preacher or actor. But even as to the end sought, Mr. Clement Scott declares that "dogma and drama are impossible companions," and Mr. William Winter asserts unqualifiedly that "Christian ethics on the stage would be as inappropriate as Mr. Owen's Solon Shingle in the pulpit." And these men know quite as much about it as well-meaning but poorly informed clergymen who endorse patent medicines and popular stage dramas.

It is a well-known and notorious fact, however, that pious plays and pure plays are not as attractive to theatre-goers generally as plays that cannot by any stretch of the imagination or conscience be called pure or pious. Religious play-goers are

not seeking moral lessons when they go to the theatre. Plays and actors of another sort are sure to be more popular with that kind of pleasure seekers when they visit the theatre. The experiment has been too often tried, with the same result, to leave any intelligent observer in doubt on the subject. Religious plays had the start in theatres, but they gave way to something better suited to the audience centuries ago. Theatre managers generally would agree with the Nestor of that class, Mr. A. M. Palmer, as already quoted, when he says: "The chief themes of the theatre are now, as they have ever been, the passions of men: ambition leading to murder; jealousy leading to murder; lust leading to adultery and to death; anger leading to madness."

An excellent illustration of the modern theatre in one of its higher phases, as viewed from the standpoint of the better class of theatre-goers, on the one hand, and of the skilled dramatic critic on the other

hand, is furnished in the record of a visit to Philadelphia by Madame Sara Bernhardt, to perform the chief part in Sardou's "La Tosca," at the Chestnut Street Opera House. Madame Bernhardt is no commonplace performer; she is called "the most effective emotional actress in the world," "indisputably mistress" in the art of tragedy, a "genius" in her professional realm. Hence many who would draw a sharp line between poor acting and good, feel called on to witness the performance of such an artist as this.

According to the reports of the most trustworthy daily papers of the city, the large audience that greeted the eminent artist "represented the most thoughtful and the sincerest admirers of the play" in Philadelphia, "but out of deference to the penitential season [it being Holy Week] they had, for the most part, avoided the garb and demeanor of fashion." It was no rabble that was present, but rather the in-

telligent and conscientious believers in "the co-work of the pulpit and the stage" for the elevation of the morals of the community.

The play itself is characterized by the discriminating dramatic critic of *The Public Ledger*—a paper with a high reputation for clean pages for family reading—as a "monstrous conglomeration of horrors, of vile-nesses." The critic of *The Record* says that "it is especially open to objection because of its sheer and unconcealed brutality." "Physical agony and elemental passion are presented with brutal bluntness in a series of rudimentally contrived situations," is the way it appears to *The Press* critic. *The Inquirer's* critic speaks of it as "a mawkish, miserable tale, told with revolting realism." These hints from professional observers are sufficient to give an outsider a tolerably correct idea of the play as a whole, without the trouble of going to see it, in order to measure its moral worth.

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But the fact that the play itself is a "monstrous conglomeration of horrors, of vilenesses," is by no means a reason for its exclusion from the stage, in the opinion of the careful critic of *The Public Ledger*, who thus characterizes it. He even insists that, "the worse the play,—and what play could, all things being considered, be worse?—the greater the triumph of the actress, who, having material so repulsive to work with, so deftly, with art so consummate, shaped and formed it as to make the spectator see in it only elements of sentiment, emotion, passion, which humanized, almost ennobled, even that which was most repellent in it."

The well-known critic of *The Times* says of the plays and the actors: "The torture scene is unjustifiably harrowing, but with all the intense reality that she gives to the woman's suffering, her exquisite art yet turns it all to favor and prettiness." This power of art to transfigure and beautify

scenes of actual physical horror is the crowning triumph of her whole performance, which reaches its climax in the terrific murder of "Scarpia." "When she fiercely plunges the blade into the villain's heart, and as he falls shakes the knife in his face, hurling imprecations on him, the scene is one not easily to be forgotten." Is there any wonder that the critic feels that "through all these awful scenes the *sweet femininity* of Madame Bernhardt, the charm of her personality, and the charity and beauty of her speech, command unfailing sympathy." What does "The Christian" or "The Sign of the Cross" offer to rival this as a lesson in "sweet femininity" to a woman who is seeking the best examples?

According to The Press critic, the prevailing affection of the heroine of the play is "her fleshly love,—a fleshliness that Madame Bernhardt in some ineffable way exalts." What a help to a pure-minded young girl it must be to have gross "fleshly



love" exalted in some ineffable way before her observant eyes!

This is merely an outline picture of a single performance of a favorite genius of the stage, in the Quaker City of America, as given by the critics and admirers of the drama. It is an illustration of what is being done in all our great cities, and of what is being said about it by those who claim to know it better than outside objectors.

If, indeed, it be true, as the critics seem to think, that the worse the play the greater the triumph of the actor in rendering it bearable to a decent spectator, would it not be well to have the story of "Jack the Ripper" dramatized for some star tragedian, who might have the genius to humanize, and almost ennoble, the doings of the famous Whitechapel artist? It would seem possible to make even a more "monstrous conglomeration of horrors, of vile-nesses," out of that story, than Sardou has yet produced. If the "fleshly love" of the

hero in this new play were "in some inef-fable way" exalted by the actor for the benefit of young men who attend the theatre as a means of liberal education, what a gain there would be to the community!

If, according to the unbiased testimony of theatre critics and theatre lovers, this be the modern theatre on its higher plane, then let the man who wants to be under such teaching and influences—go to his own place.

There are unquestionably worthy men and women in the actor's profession; but is any one of them in a worthy profession? Ought any pure or noble man or woman to be in a profession which demands a life of simulation and of un-selfing? Ought any pure or noble man or woman who is outside of that profession to give countenance or support to the institution of the theatre which demands these lives of simulation and un-selfing? Is not even the entering the doors of a public theatre for the wit-

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nessing of the performances of professional actors to give to this unworthy institution unjustifiable countenance and support?

That a professional actor destroys or diminishes his truest personality by giving his best powers and endeavors to simulation and imitation, rather than to creation or to independent action, would seem to be shown beyond the possibility of disproof. There are those, however, who, seeing the force of this truth, seek to break it by suggesting that it applies equally to the professional reader or elocutionist. Because this suggestion has been put forward by some, it is worthy of passing notice. If it be true that the profession of an actor does tend to destroy or diminish the actor's best and truest self, and that the profession of a dramatic reader or elocutionist has the same tendency and in a like degree, then the conclusion follows that the dramatic reader or elocutionist is in an undesirable and unworthy profession. A correct principle is

none the less correct because it interferes with a favorite practice or practitioner. But are the two professions and practices of dramatic acting and dramatic reading entirely similar?

It may indeed be, in a given case, that a man so gives himself to dramatic reading as a profession that he sinks himself in that profession of impersonating, and thus greatly loses in individuality and force of independent character. But the ordinary reader in public, or the instructor in elocution, employs his power as an impersonator of characters, so that he is the master, and not the servant, of his varied impersonations. His impersonation is merely subordinate and incidental, like the occasional amateur actor, or speaker, or reader, or preacher. Any clear thinker can see the distinction between sympathetic, forceful reading in portrayal of a dozen characters in the same brief narrative, for the purpose of giving emphasis to a truth, or of illus-

trating the power of the voice and physical action, and the sinking of one's personality in the profession of an actor and imitator. But the question of this distinction does not militate against the force of the chief objection to the actor's degrading profession; nor is this a real difficulty in the mind of one who wishes to know the truth and to conform his course to it.

It will be observed that in this present discussion of the theatre and of its actors, the whole argument pivots on the influence and tendency of the profession of an actor. Whether those who support the theatre by their patronage are helped or harmed by attending, is quite apart from the main question. Yet in the popular discussion of the theatre, in pulpit and press, the supposed influence of theatre-going is made the chief factor. If one can say that a given play is pure, and that to witness it on a certain occasion is found refreshing and otherwise helpful to those attending, that is thought

to be a fair argument in the case. But quite apart from this there is the main question, as presented in this treatment of the case, of the essential worthiness or unworthiness of the profession of an actor.

Granted that in the case of a particular play, and of particular spectators, individuals may be refreshed and otherwise aided through witnessing the performance, is it well to have such persons thus helped if the actors giving them this help are in a profession that tends to their own permanent injury, and is quite unworthy of their called-for devotion? That is the main question. That is the question that has to be met and considered.

## **Concerning the Social Dance**





## Concerning the Social Dance

“DANCING! You don’t mean that you are so puritanical that you object to social dancing? Why don’t you take ground against making mince-pies for Christmas, or a man’s kissing his wife on Sunday? You might as well go the whole figure, now that you are about it. But, seriously and sensibly, can you see any harm in little children moving about the nursery in rhythmic measures, to the sound of sweet music?

“No, there certainly cannot be any fair exception taken to *that* kind of dancing. But, on the other hand, do you think there is no fair exception to be taken to promiscuous dancing in a public ball with the greater part of the night given to it, with other incidental excitements?”

“Why, of course *that* is an extreme that

all the more sensible persons see wrong or danger in. It's only the more moderate course that is to be approved.

“Then it is recognized on both sides that there is one extreme which can be approved, and another extreme which is not to be commended. This shows that the sensible course is somewhere between these two extremes, and that raises the question, Where is the dividing line, on each side of which there is border ground? Is it not worth a reasonable man's while to consider the location of that line? Nothing more and nothing less than this is intended in this discussion.”

Dancing has frequent mention in the Bible as a form of worship and as a mode of merrymaking; as evidencing a spirit of reverence and praise, and a joyous, cheerful spirit, as there is also in connection with drinking and general festivities. When Israel had passed through the Red Sea, “Miriam the prophetess, the sister of

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Aaron, took a timbrel in her hand; and all the women went out after her with timbrels and with dances." When Jephthah returned from his victory over Ammon, "his daughter came out to meet him with timbrels and with dances." David is said to have "danced before the Lord with all his might," when the ark of the covenant was borne to its resting-place. *That* would seem to be a safe mode of dancing, "before the Lord" and with all one's might. Yet even then David's wife thought it was not entirely seemly. The command to God's people was,

"Let them praise his name in the dance :

Let them sing praises unto him with the timbrel  
and harp ; "

and again,

"Praise him with the timbrel and dance."

It is said of the Amalekites, when they had taken spoil from their enemies, that they were making merry "eating and drink-

ing and dancing." And in the parable of the Prodigal Son it is said that the elder brother "heard music and dancing" in the old homestead as a sign of the festivities over the younger son's return. The daughter of Herodias danced before Herod and pleased him, on the celebration of his birthday. And it is admitted by Koheleth that there is "a time to dance," as well as "a time to mourn."

It is, however, to be observed, that in all the mentions, in the Bible, of dancing as a mode of worship, or as a sign of joy, there is no instance in which the two sexes danced together. Men danced by themselves, and women danced by themselves; unless, indeed, there be a possible exception in those cases where little children are spoken of as dancing; as where Job says of the wicked, "their children dance," and where Jesus refers to children piping to their fellows in the market-place, in order that they may dance.

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However this may be, there is nothing in the Bible to aid in drawing the dividing line, in modern dancing, between the extremes, so as to fix the desirable borders. As it does not seem to have been a practice in those days for young persons of the two sexes to dance together, we must look elsewhere for a practical solution of the question at issue.

In Oriental countries in former ages, and more or less to the present day, the two sexes have little to do with each other, outside of family bounds, and even children of the two sexes in the same family are not permitted to be much together after they have passed the age of mere childhood. Changes of custom in this regard make differences in such a matter as dancing quite natural. No one would even now object to brothers and sisters dancing together in the home circle. It is only when young people of different sexes who are not of the same family come together in the social dance,

that there is likely to be any question as to the tendency of the custom, or as to the danger points to be guarded against.

All will admit that even a proper practice may be carried to excess. The practical question is, What is the tendency of a given practice? Does that practice naturally and generally lead to excess? Dancing in the open air, either as an act of religion or as an expression of joy, would naturally find its limits within a reasonable time. Brothers and sisters might safely mingle in that practice without being tempted to keep at it all night, or even long after the dew was falling, or the chill of darkness was on. Most of the Bible instances of dancing were in the open air. The exceptions were of professional dancing women, or of those lacking modesty, in connection with scenes of dissipation. But when dancing is by young persons of opposite sexes, who are not of the same family, in the heated air of a comparatively close room in the evening,

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other elements are introduced, and this surely necessitates care in discriminating and judging.

It cannot be denied that young people who are not of the same family are generally readier to join in an evening dance indoors, and to keep at it hour by hour, than to share in conversation however bright and spirited, or in any games of skill without the element of chance in them. How far this shows a tendency of this particular practice which needs guarding against by the cautious and sensible, is certainly well worth considering. That there has been a decided change and manifest progress in this thing in the past two generations, is unmistakable.

Fifty years ago, and more, the writer of these pages lived in a seashore borough of New England which was a popular summer resort, with the influences of the summer extending into the winter. In the summer, dancing was the chief occupation

at the fashionable hotels in the evening. In the winter, dancing parties, larger or smaller, in the homes of the villagers, occupied the young people during several evenings of each week. In fact, there was little done in that village in the line of pleasure-seeking except social dancing. At the time, only one young man besides the writer, in that village, was a non-dancer. Neither of these two had any conscientious scruples against dancing. Both were influenced merely by the absorbed interest shown by the young people in the interminable dance to the neglect of all intelligent social enjoyments. Both were at most of the gatherings for dancing, as they were "in society," but only as cooler headed observers; and the opinions of the writer on the dancing question had their start at that time, although they have been modified or confirmed in some particulars by later and fuller observations.

In those early days with the young dan-



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cers, the writer learned several lessons which he has had reason to value in later years. One was, the social advantage to a young woman in not being a dancer where most of her companions are. As he and his non-dancing fellow, with an occasional reinforcement for a time among those who rested from the dance, stood outside the circle in free converse with the few young women who from any cause were not sharers in the dance, he had occasion to notice the extra brightness in conversation of these young women in comparison with those who danced, as he knew them then and at other times. There was one who by lameness was shut off from dancing. She was evidently one of the very brightest and keenest in her set. There were a few, a very few, whose parents objected to dancing. They also were exceptionally bright in conversation. Noting this, he made it a subject of study and of personal inquiry.

In his early Stonington home, and in his

later Hartford and Philadelphia homes, he was freely told by some who either could not or would not dance, that just because they were deprived of the privilege of shining in the dances they felt the necessity and enjoyed the privilege of trying to be attractive in some more sensible way. In this he saw a secret of their success. Subsequently he was confirmed in the conviction that there was real force in the value of such a pressure on intelligent and sensible young women who were unwilling to share in the social dance, with all that it involved. They, he found, felt an added duty to evidence greater power, rather than less, in their making an evening pleasant to their companions, wherever they were. Other young men, whom he knew, were convinced of the same thing.

A young man, or a man already old enough to be called quite a "bachelor," who was exceptionally fine looking, a man of choice family associations, of irreproach-

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able personal character, and with a handsome income, a man, indeed, who would be called quite a desirable "match," told him one day that he had decided to marry, and he explained how it was. He said it had seemed to him as if most of the young women of his acquaintance found their chief enjoyment in social dancing and such amusements, while he thought this not an exalted standard for them. But one evening, as he was at a social gathering where dancing was the chief occupation, he noticed a young woman of attractive appearance outside the dancing circle. Being presented to her, he asked why she was not dancing. He found that she did not feel it to be worth her while,—worthy of her, in fact. In further conversation he found her bright, sensible, and well informed to an exceptional degree. They were soon betrothed.

He is by no means the only fine young man whom the author has known to find a good

wife, and an attractive one, among the non-dancers in a social circle. This is not given as a reason for abjuring dancing; but it *is* mentioned as illustrative of the truth, which has been influential in the author's mind for many years, that there is a positive gain to a young woman in being necessitated to use other powers of attraction in society than those called for in dancing.

When the author had daughters of his own to guide in their training, he found this a practical question of no little importance and delicacy. Most of their immediate associates and companions—far more, as has been said, then than now—were accustomed to dance. Perhaps there was but a single family, among all those whom he knew more intimately, where social dancing was not practiced. He made no arbitrary prohibitions for their guidance, but he did tell them that he deemed it unworthy of his daughters to enter into a social competition where the test of superiority was

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in the toes rather than in the brain, and they lovingly considered his preferences.

In these days of bicycles, and golf links, and lawn tennis, and various other athletic amusements, as well as of select classes in art study or in history of current events, and of various forms of fashionable handiwork, there is no such dearth of sensible occupations as thirty years ago; but then it was *dance* or die. When a hostess wanted to present a young man guest to her niece, the author's daughter, at an evening gathering, she mentioned the fact that her niece did not dance, whereat the young man gasped out:

"She doesn't *dance*! Why, then, what can I say to her?" His stock phrases in conversation were of no use to him. Poor bankrupt! But that was twenty-five years ago. There has been progress since then. The social dance has no such prominence, or preëminence, as at that period. Perhaps in the struggle of social life, where only the

fittest survive, our descendants will hear of this only as we hear of some other things which our fathers found enjoyment in, but which we can hardly understand.

While the daughters of the author were still quite young, he was repeatedly told by his friends in social life that his views on the dancing question must shut out his daughters from many opportunities of desirable acquaintance, and would stand in the way of their advancement. One friend, of prominence in the social world, expressed the view of many when he said:

“Trumbull, your course is sure to stand in the way of your daughters. You are training them to be mere wallflowers in social life. They never will get husbands, for they will not be where they can be known. When it is too late you'll find your mistake.”

But the author had already observed enough of life to know that a young woman gains more in character and attractiveness,

and in the estimate put upon her by desirable young men, by being a non-dancer, than she can lose in any way through not dancing. His five daughters won five most worthy young men, while neither mere wallflowers nor yet dancers. He is confident that their training to share in pleasant social life without mainly depending on the use of their toes as an attraction has been a prominent factor in their winsomeness toward others. So much for this mere incidental result of non-dancing, which actually stands as a bugbear in many a questioning mother's mind.

But there was another lesson learned by the author in those early days, which has been confirmed in all the subsequent years. This lesson has a more direct moral bearing than the other. It is based on the exceptional opportunity given in the social dance for a young man of not the highest moral character to be temporarily, at least, intimate with a pure-minded and unsuspicious

young woman, and possibly to pave the way for subsequent intimacy. In this the social dance is different from any other form of recreation in vogue in social life. Lest there be any doubt on this point, it will be well to carefully consider the fact at the start.

Being partners in a dance brings two young persons into closer relations, for the time being, with opportunities for free conversation overheard by no one else, in the heated air or close room, while the blood is warmed and quickened by active exercise, as is the case in no other allowable amusement, indoors or out. *This* is undeniable. And with the claims and customs of society as they are, a young woman who dances at all does not feel entirely free to dance only with one whom she respects and could utterly trust, and to decline to dance with other guests in the home of her host. A kind-hearted young woman, even the purest and most cautious, who is at a social



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dance, would hardly feel free to say to a young man just presented to her by their hostess, and who asked if he might be her partner in the next dance, that she did not yet know enough of him, or, on the other hand, that she did know too much of him by repute, to grant him that privilege of intimacy. This being the case, a young woman is of necessity liable to be brought into the position of being the special partner, for a time, of a man utterly unworthy of such an honor.

It will not do to say, that in any ordinary social gathering there ought not to be, or there is not, any young man who is of doubtful reputation, or who is unworthy of being a pure woman's partner for a brief time. With the constitution of society as it is in America, to say nothing of other countries, such young men are to be found in the choicest social circles. Even if these are not guests in *every* home where social circles gather, there are such in *some* of the

houses of that circle, and the most cautious young woman is sure to have such persons presented to her, in one home or another, who will ask to be her partner in a dance. And this surely is an important fact—too important to be ignored.

The author knew young men, in his earlier days, and he has known or has known of many others in later years, who were not fit acquaintances for any pure-minded woman, yet who were often partners in the social dance with the purest-minded young women, and who could not have secured such intimacy (which was sought by them mainly to give an opportunity for poisoning the pure mind) except through the customs of the social dance. No such intimacy, with its opportunities, could be secured in ordinary conversation or in walking parties or in athletic games. Moreover, there a pure woman's very instinct might serve her a good purpose (as such a man addressed her in ordinary intercourse), and

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protect her from closer acquaintance; but the very customs of the partnership of the dance give an advantage to the evil-disposed man, and put her at a disadvantage. *Men* can see, and do realize, the force of these statements, as few women are able to.

Foreigners, from what we call less civilized countries than our own, are surprised and in some instances shocked, at the sight of the liberties allowed to young men and young women of the better class of society in the promiscuous dancing of our ordinary social life. The more intelligent men coming to us from Turkey, Persia, India, Siam, China, Japan, Korea, Morocco, Abyssinia, and other countries on a similar plane with these, look with amazement at the social dances here in which young people of the two sexes indulge even on slight acquaintance; and they sometimes judge harshly the nominal religion of the land which permits this. Is it because our civilization shows us that this form of familiarity be-

tween the sexes, with the excitement of active exercise in heated rooms, without the fullest guards against the admission of any unworthy, or impure or designing man, has no such dangers as would seem to an intelligent observer to exist? Or are we really less cautious and strict than is becoming to sensible Christians? This is surely worth thinking about.

To be sure, there are different dances, some of which are more objectionable than others. Many individuals draw a dividing line between these. Yet there are few social circles where dancing is esteemed and practiced, in which "round" dances are wholly debarred and only "square" dances are permitted. Many a young woman refuses to waltz with any man who is not already an intimate and trusted friend. This, indeed, shows her consciousness of the fact that a pure woman's nature shrinks from such liberties with her person as are permitted in the waltz, but would not be

tolerated elsewhere from any man not her accepted and betrothed lover; but, on the other hand, her waltzing at all gives her seeming approval to this mode of dancing, and many observers think little of the special limitations she makes. It is a notable fact that many "men of the world," as well as yet more men of special uprightness, are unwilling that their wives should ever waltz with other men than their husbands, even though both husband and wife danced freely with other partners before they married.

Yet in places of summer resort, at mountain or seaside, in New England or farther south, as well as in other circles at other seasons, young women who would not wish to lack the fullest respect of their fellow-guests, are seen evening after evening, year by year, to be waltzing or dancing in other ways with young men who are known by many to be utterly unworthy to be their companions. If they knew how

many pitied them for their conduct in this amusement, or were forced to give them a lower place in their esteem than that of sensitively pure-minded women, they would never indulge in this amusement in this way again. Among the lookers-on there are always those who have known such sad results in so many cases, from just this beginning, that *their* estimate of the peril incurred by being over the border line in this amusement is often greatly aggravated and intensified. *Men*, as has been said, can understand this, as a true woman, thank God! cannot.

**Gain of the Higher Side**





## Gain of the Higher Side

IN all questionable matters there is a higher side, and a lower side; a safer side, and a side less safe; a stricter side, and a laxer side; a side which requires self-denial, and a side which permits indulgence. On which side is it best to place one's self? This is a practical and often momentous question. It needs to be carefully considered.

It does not follow that the *safer* side in *all* matters is the best to pursue. A soldier in war time would be ashamed of himself, and his friends would have reason to be ashamed of him, if he were to seek always the place of safety for himself, or were determinedly to avoid positions of danger. It may be his first duty to go where danger is greatest. So it is with

the policeman, the fireman, the member of the life-saving coast-guard, the physician, the sanitary expert, the trained nurse, the loving mother when her child is stricken with pestilence, and many another generous worker for others. But in order to make going into danger a duty, there must be a worthy object of pursuit. When duty calls, danger is to be disregarded. Then he who would save his life loses what is more than life, and he who loses his life is the one who finds it. But it must first be clear that duty does call in the direction of danger. Then, it is sometimes found that the way of danger is the safer way.

Where duty calls to danger, a repression of self, and a determined purpose of resisting selfish calls to look out for one's self, are a necessity. At such a time the path of duty is the difficult path, while the path away from duty is easier and in a sense more attractive, weak human nature being as it is. But the path of duty when faith-

fully and resolutely followed gives added character to the pursuer, and proves the best in the long run.

But in a question of morals, where it is on the one hand self-denial and on the other hand self-indulgence, the higher side is always the better, whether it be the side of danger or of safety. The difference may seem slight between the two sides of the dividing line, but the grade, however slight, either rises or descends from the start. Purer air and more bracing is found on the upper grade. Malarial mists are in the hollow, and one is conscious of them as he leaves the higher regions. In considering any border line of morals, one may be sure that, where there is no demand of duty to be heeded, it is always, always safer and better to choose the higher side. It is safer for one's self; it is safer for those who are influenced by one's example.

One gains in character and in the esteem of his fellows through standing determin-

edly on the higher side. When the author was approaching young manhood, and was first facing for himself the question of these border lines in laxer social customs, his good father said to him one day:

“Henry, would you like to be respected and looked up to by all your companions, as you grow up?”

“Of course I would, father.”

“Well, if you won’t drink, or use tobacco, or dance, or play cards, you will be respected by others, if you have nothing else than this to recommend you. You will be a leader through this self-control, even if the other boys have more brains or more friends than you have.”

The author’s father was a wise man of few words, and he did not argue the case, but left it with his son, when he had briefly made his suggestion and statement. He knew the ambition of every true youth, and he based on that an appeal to his son’s better desires. He had named the social

customs of his neighborhood, against which he thought it better for his son to stand out. Had there been a theatre there, he would doubtless have included that, but there was none; so that was not named. His son thought the matter over, and concluded that the experiment was certainly worth trying, and he tried it. Of course, he had to be singular in a community where most persons acted differently. He had to meet and resist invitations and temptings. And he had at first to face ridicule and sneers from many whose good opinion he would have valued. But he kept at it because he would not be dragooned into conforming to the ways of others simply because they wanted it. And there came a manifest gain in this course.

Gradually he found that, by the very fact of standing out against the customs of his community in laxer matters, he was all the time in training in a moral gymnasium. His moral muscles were being developed

and hardened. His moral backbone was being strengthened. His moral independence was being made completer. While he was pursuing the course which he deemed better, his companions were the weaker through huddling together and moving on, or being moved, in a mass. He gained in self-respect. He found that, as he stood the test of their invitings and their sneerings, he won a certain respect from them. He perceived a new meaning in his father's pregnant words; and now, as he looks back through the vista of a half-century, he is convinced that to no single teaching of his beloved father, and to no one line of personal action on his own part, does he owe so much of the best strength of character that he has had to exercise in time of trial in the passing years, as to that one teaching which involves all the questions concerning these border lines.

Therefore it is that the author says to every young man and every young woman

who will heed him, "If you want to stand higher with your companions, keep on the higher side of the border lines here pointed out. You are sure to be gainers so far, whatever may happen to you." And to every thoughtful parent he says earnestly, "You cannot do a better thing for your sons and daughters, in order to improve their personal character and to advantage them socially, than to impress upon them this truth. It will be worth more to them than a university education, followed by a two years' trip to Europe." This he does say out of the convictions of his lifelong experience and observings, however others may feel about it. Is not the suggested course worth trying?

Yet there are young people who for themselves, and parents who for their children, actually think that young people who have kept, or who have been kept, on the higher side of these border lines, are somehow the losers thereby. What shortsightedness!

It is true that it takes more trouble to rear a family, and to train children, in conformity with a higher stand, than to let them go with the popular current, and to do as others do in the community about them. It certainly costs more at the start, but in the long run it surely pays. This is the case with everything worth having in this world. It costs unremitting struggle to climb up hill. It is so much easier to slide downward without effort. Yet the one who finally stands in the purer air on the mountain height with its extended outlook, would never be willing to exchange places with the poor fellow weakened or maimed at the mountain's foot who would not be at the trouble of the upward struggle. As with individuals, so with families.

In homes where there are a number of young people to enjoy themselves in the family circle with one another, or with friends from outside, if cards and dancing are in order these are the stock amusements



and entertainings of the evening inside, as is the theatre for outside of the home. There is no variety, no choice. It is the same monotonous round year after year. Bright thoughts, keen wit, inventive minds, are not called for in invitations in such circles. But where these conventional amusements—the same for dullards and geniuses and for those of every grade between—are not depended on for enjoyment, there is a demand, and there is occasion, for ingenuity in making an evening enjoyable and the company entertaining.

As a rule, the more senseless and less intelligent an occupation, for young people who are merely seeking pleasure, the more satisfying. But the best minds and the best spirits want something better, even in hours of recreation. They want it; they have it, and they show it to others.

There are such homes and such family circles in which cards and dancing are not the chief means of recreation, but where,

when the young people are together for an evening of recreation and merrymaking in bright and fun-provoking amusements, there is an ever-fresh variety and there are ever-delightful methods of having and giving cheer. Those who know of the methods of enjoyment and recreation in these circles, recognize the superiority of such means to the common and more commonplace monotonies of card-playing and dancing social circles, and are glad that they have been taught and helped to the higher place. It is a pity that there are not more thus advantaged.

**What the World Thinks of It**



## What the World Thinks of It

A VERY common idea among Christians who mingle socially with those outside of the church fold is, that they gain added influence over the outsiders by conforming in a measure to their laxer customs. They think that in this way they will show that they are not "bigoted" or "puritanical" or "strait-laced," and that their ideas of religion are not such as to make it repellent to the young or to others who would find enjoyment in life. There can hardly be a greater mistake than this.

As a matter of fact, the world's standard for Christians in matters of outward conduct is higher than Christians' standard for Christians in the same line. Christians take into consideration the spirit and motives of a believer as back of all conduct, and they

judge accordingly, but men outside of the church lay chief emphasis on outer conduct, and shape their judgments of a believer by his course with reference to the highest standard of morals. A Christian is not so likely as a man of the world to judge a Christian severely because of his indulgence in theatre-going, or card-playing, or dancing, or wine-drinking, or tobacco-using. Apart from the question whether these things are in themselves right or wrong, it is a fact that men of the world who practice them have a higher respect for a Christian who abjures them than for a Christian who indulges in them.

Two well-known Christian gentlemen were sitting with a gentleman who was not a church-member. The latter and one of the former were smoking, and when a cigar was proffered to and was declined by the third, the Christian smoker expressed regret that his companion did not smoke. "And I honor him the more for that," was

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the instant response of the man of the world. "His standard is clearly higher than ours." This surprised the Christian smoker, because it was an implied censure of his own course, yet it was in accord with the views of men of the world generally as to laxity or strictness in questions of debatable propriety.

An army chaplain in our Civil War thought to bring himself on better terms with his fellow-officers by sharing a simple game of whist with them, and conforming to their laxer practices in other lines. He did this because he really believed that he was thus gaining added influence for good. That course so lost him the respect of officers and men who were not Christians that his usefulness as a chaplain was speedily at an end.

On an ocean steamer, a clergyman and his young companion were the only total abstainers at their cabin table. They were repeatedly urged to drink for their own

good, and they were spoken of as unwisely strict in their abstinence. But the very men who thus criticised them spoke with a contemptuous sneer of the course, in this line, of another clergyman at an adjoining table, who was supposed to take a glass of wine socially—although he really did not do so. The mere supposition that a clergyman would do what they were asking another clergyman to do gave them a lower estimate of that clergyman.

A young girl who had been brought up to dance and to go to the theatre, and whose father seemed to have little interest in religious matters, connected herself with the church. Wishing not to seem a gloomy Christian, she continued in her old habits of social life. Yet her father told a clergyman friend that he should have a higher regard for his daughter's religion if it kept her from dancing and theatre-going.

It does not follow that the world's standard is the correct one, or that Christians



ought to conform their course to the world's opinion as to their duty. So far as that is concerned, a Christian ought to do what is right whether those who observe him deem his course correct or incorrect. If it be a Christian's positive duty (whether he be a clergyman or a layman) to drink and to smoke and to dance and to play cards and to go to the theatre, then he ought to do those things courageously, as unto God, be the consequences what they may. But if he has the privilege of a choice, and can occupy the higher or the lower plane as he deems best, and if, in the exercise of this choice, he would "have good testimony from them that are without," and would gain influence by his conduct as well as by his character over men of the world whose practices are on the lower plane, he may be sure that he will gain through his personal conformity to the higher standard rather than to the lower.

If the clergyman who goes into the

smoking-car, or the smoking compartment of a Pullman car, to enjoy his cigar on an express train, or who is seen smoking on the veranda of a summer hotel, or who has a quiet game of cards in the card and smoking room of an ocean steamer or of a sea-shore hotel, or who is seen in a theatre trying to elevate the drama in that way, could but hear the expressed opinions of his course by his companions there and of those outsiders who know of his being there, he would himself realize, as many others now realize, what a lowering of the public estimate of him he is securing by this course, and how many there are who value less the most earnest words that he speaks for truth on any occasion or in any place.

The opinion that the world holds as to the clergyman who is content to occupy the lower plane in the border-line regions of debatable morals, shows what is the recognized higher standard in the estima-

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tion of the world for Christian laymen as well as for Christian ministers. The world may be wrong in its estimate of the right standard of conduct for Christians; but, right or wrong, the world's standard for Christians is on the higher side of every border line in debatable questions of morals. As to this there can be no reasonable doubt in the mind of one familiar with the opinions of the world.









